The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE CHURCH IN CONFERENCE

IT IS good news of the most positive kind which is proclaimed in the first paragraph of the report issued by the news service of the National Catholic Welfare Conference concerning the general meeting of the bishops held in Washington, D. C., between November 12 and 15. The multitude of activities which comprise the vast work of the various departments of the Conference have been greatly expanded during the year that has passed since the last session of the conference, despite all the grave and sometimes very serious handicaps imposed by the economic stress of the times. In other words, the crisis has been a challenge to the Church which it has met by expansion, not by contraction, of its energies. Feeling the pressure of the economic difficulties fully as much, if not more, than any other organization, nevertheless the Church turns inward to the deepest sources of its life with ever-increasing faith and confidence, and through its leaders presents ample proof of how that faith and confidence are being justified by the growth and strengthening of its myriad organizations and activities.

Naturally enough, what the bishops had to say about the persecution of all religion in Mexico surpasses in general interest the other reports which summarized the normal work of the many departments of the conference, yet it is precisely in these less extraordinary branches of the bishops' labors that the intense vitality of Catholic Action is most abundantly displayed. Before, however, we turn to these reports in order to find the proofs for these general statements, it will be well to glance at the statement on Mexico, and to remark how, in dealing with it, the spiritual leaders of the Church in the United States apply to that exceptional and most fundamental problem the same central principle which unifies and directs all the manifold activities of the Church

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under the normal conditions of peace and liberty which so happily prevail in this country. For while our bishops, most completely informed as to the conditions in Mexico, solemnly affirm and deplore the anti-Christian tyranny which prevails in Mexico, and present the proofs of the terrible persecution of religion now raging in that country, they call upon their faithful followers to depend upon spiritual means, and not physical force, or political action, to combat that tyranny, and its consequent persecution.

"We implore the faithful," the bishops say, "to pray most earnestly, to offer their self-denials and their special acts of devotion for the ending of the persecution of the Church in Mexico. We ask them to make themselves apostles proclaiming to the world the iniquity and the tyranny that mutilate and despoil the Body of Christ." And again: "We wish to say as we said in 1926: 'What we have written is no call on the faithful here or elsewhere to purely human action. It is no interposition of our influence either as bishops or as citizens to reach those who possess political power anywhere on earth, and least of all in our own country, to the end that they should intervene with armed force in the internal affairs of Mexico for the protection of the Church.' "

But the bishops believe that, with full abstinence from all political interference in Mexico, and grounding all other efforts upon spiritual means, much more could and should be done to bring the truth about Mexico before the American people. They plead with the secular press to do its duty in this respect. They point out that the full consequences of the persecution of the Church and of Catholics in Mexico can scarcely be foreseen at the present time. "They cannot but eventually be very grave. Those who must flee from their own country into ours bring with them a problem to which we cannot be indifferent. It is not without significance that in the present turmoil of the world and distress of nations, the basic truths of religion from which has sprung the stability of nations are flouted and denied by those who seek absolutism in government. The struggle, therefore, which arises from the persecution of the Church in Mexico today is an illustration of a crisis which may have far-reaching consequences."

It is evident, turning from the statement on Mexico to other reports, that the bishops desire all Catholics to realize that the strengthening and extension of the spiritual foundations of civilization is the paramount problem of the age. In full accordance with this main policy was their action in appointing a committee to draw up a plan for the establishment of a central office of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, under the administrative committee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. As the crisis of the age proceeds in its world-wide fermentation, the need for Catholic leadership in the teaching of Christian knowledge—the most practical and necessary knowledge—the knowledge of the fundamental truths of Christianity itself, becomes ever more apparent. It is in answer to this need that the new committee has been formed.

In the field of more obviously practical action, the statement issued by the bishops on the motion picture question in general, and the Legion of Decency, will attract wide attention. Concerning the motion picture question itself, the bishops again make clear their fundamental position. They are not seeking to "set themselves up as a universal board of censors." They simply were obliged to oppose the degradation of the film and to arouse their own people to the need for its drastic reform. "It is especially gratifying to note that our Protestant brethren, judging by the official utterances of their leaders, are unanimous in their denunciation of the moving picture menace and untiringly zealous in their efforts to bring it to an end." Therefore, the Legion of Decency will be strengthened, extended and made permanent. The efforts made by the motion picture industry to improve its conduct are commended, but the bishops say: "All who are interested in the maintenance of right moral standards in motion picture houses should be on their guard lest any of the producers become recalcitrant, assuming that the campaign of the Legion of Decency is but a passing incident."

Both the National Council of Catholic Men and the National Council of Catholic Women report large increases in the number of affiliated societies. Space is lacking to enumerate the facts which prove the growth of the other departments, or to list their outstanding activities; but it is clear that the Church in conference feels itself vitalized by the progress of its work during the past year, and faces the new year with every evidence of faith in its further progress.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

SOME positive assurances were given that business would cooperate with the President in an effort to prevent grafting ultra-radical plans upon the monetary, banking and industrial trees of the nation. The form which this policing would take, or the results it might conceivably produce, were nevertheless pretty much matters of theory. Mr. Farley lauded the President's "good, old-fashioned horse sense," and hinted this would be an obstacle the "communistic" prophet would find it difficult to circumvent. In Mississippi there was heard, as the week of November 18 opened, a characteristic Roosevelt speech, singing the praises of T.V.A.

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and urging all good people to remember that their private fortunes were bound up with national public welfare. Put the two addresses together and you have a fairly good outline of the form which protagonists hope the future of the New Deal will assume. Grave international complications were again definitely part of the general picture. There was an unmistakable drift away from one or the other European gold currencies, especially the Belgian franc. An effort to stabilize this monetary unit had earlier involved heavy sales of gold. It was widely held that the hour of French depreciation was fast approaching. On the other hand, the Swiss were held to be prepared for almost any kind of last-ditch fight. These developments indicate how little can be expected, in the way of adjustment, from any plans for raising prices through monetary manipulation. So much at least has been accomplished.

The Saar Basin

EVENTS in the Saar Basin are interesting for numerous reasons, and upon how they shape themselves the whole future of Europe may depend. German Left-wing organizations are there making a kind of hopeless last stand; and if the voting goes against them, the banners of everything definable as Teutonic Marxism will be carried into exile—Heaven knows where. The sympathies of associated labor groups throughout Europe are necessarily involved, since every brand of Socialist or Labor movement in the western countries knows that the hour of decisive conflict with the Right is steadily approaching. Catholics, too, are in a desperate position. They can no longer effect a tactical alliance with this or that other group, in the hope of reinforcing their minority with outside strength. The Catholic Saarländer have long since lived in solidarity with their German brethren. Great political and social institutions born under the patronage of the Church have created ties almost nothing can sunder. To vote against Germany would therefore offend against not patriotic sentiment merely but also the sense of Catholic cultural unity. And the Hitlerites? Battling on the one hand for their own prestige, they realize on the other hand that hope resides for them eventually in making a peace with France which would emancipate them from international political pressure. The hope of utilizing the Saar issue as a step toward effecting some working agreement with Paris now, at the last moment, takes the place of earlier endeavors to placate Mussolini. On the one hand, the issue must be as always "Germany for the Germans"; on the other hand, it must likewise be conceivable as "Germany not against Europe." For all these reasons, the little coal-mining region merits the interested attention which observers everywhere are giving it.

Character or Plans?

A HANDY plan for United States economic happiness has recently been issued by the National Survey of Potential Product Capacity, one of the numerous anomalously official surveys which have been conducted with the aid of government funds under the F.E.R.A. This survey indicates that privation and want in our country for generations "could have been eliminated at any time." Our production facilities, it is stated, are such that "the wants of every citizen could have been fulfilled without the necessity of capacity production," if—and here is the Gordian knot—every one of the country's 27,000,000 families had had a minimum buying power of $4,370 a year, without any increase in living costs. Obviously inflation would not aid in bringing about this desideratum, because, aside from the difficulty of getting the money distributed around evenly to every family, there would be an immediate increase in costs. Something similar to the terrible "dance of the marks" witnessed in Germany when the printing presses were turned loose and a million marks would not buy a small steak or a pair of shoes, would result in a demoralization of living conditions worse than the present.

EVEN if living costs could be stabilized while incomes were magically raised to the proposed level, there should be some consideration of how the income would be used. Conceivably it would go for more automobiles, electric appliances, better culture, clothes, homes and food. On the other hand, millions might decide to get along with subsistence things about as they have been getting along and celebrate the millenium with mass movements of whoopee and abandonment of fretful toil that would result in a national headache and depletion of the available national riches that would leave the country semi-permanently dazed and depressed—the hard-won national character, forged through generations of struggle and brave facing of realities, dissipated by a dream of ease and security without struggle or self-sacrifice, by a paper plan for everyone getting rich quick. We make these comments not as counsels of despair, or in ridicule; because we believe that such surveys as the one quoted do help in the development of social improvements heartily to be desired by everyone. Caution, however, initiative and human fortitude (not to mention some superior spiritual strengths) are, we believe, going to continue to be staples of value as they have been since the dawn of history. Should every family have $5,000 a year, there would still be problems of abuse of power, of maladjustments and baffling eccentricities, to prove again that economic utopias, like political utopias, cannot rise above the level of character of the people.

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RESPECT and veneration will long enshrine the memory of Pietro Cardinal Gasparri, who at eighty-two was in hardly any sense an old man. He figured in decisions of great historical importance—the plea for a settlement of the war through peaceful diplomatic action which startled the world in 1917; the signing of the Lateran Treaties; and the codification of canon law. What distinguished him from other men was, however, the extraordinary force and purposiveness of his mind. He diagnosed the relations between the Church and distraught human society with singular lucidity, realizing that one thing alone was necessary—a rousing summons to moral standards at once high and human. Mere traditionalism he could throw off like a discarded cloak. No old quarrels, no easy recipes of opportunism, were allowed to stand between the safely guarded neutrality of the Holy See and the political mission which in 1917 was both a self-evident Catholic obligation and a great venture exacting of Rome a daring which, though not crowned by immediate success, made the Church the voice of social hope for millions who had well-nigh lost confidence in everything. Similarly the Cardinal went very far toward meeting democratic governments on their own ground. He was genuinely that magnificent, very rare personage, the true "Catholic liberal." Knowing the difference between a principle and a prepossession as few men have ever known that difference, he gave the word "intransigeance" a new meaning which could have saved the world of 1914-1934 if that had not been so pathetically unable to live up to its better moments. There is no one else of his stature in that era of diplomats, and few in any age could have ranked with him.

A Papal Statesman

ANOTHER Advent, another ecclesiastical year. Can one imagine with relatively sufficient definiteness what the mission of the Church has been during the past twelve months? Every morning the Mass, virtually everywhere on earth. Every evening the prayer of the faithful, from vespers chanted by monks dwelling in ascetic congregation to the simple adoration of children on the verge of sleep. And the reality of the sacraments given, as the bread of life, the remission of sins, the sanctification of vocational bonds, the anointing unto resurrection day, to almost innumerable millions. One cannot easily imagine what earth would have been like without these essential things. Of succor in quietness, of pain softened, of passion tempered, of jubilation redeemed of unholiness, there has been so much that one can only say: the heart of man is full of the goodness of God. And yet? These have been seasons of especial collective trial for all Christians. Of real persecution there has been no dearth. The blood of many martyrs has been spilled generously, like a heaping measure of seed upon soil. Tribulation almost beyond compare has tested the strength of charity to the uttermost. Crime, violent as well as secret, cruelly cold-blooded no less than passionate, has stained half the pavements of the world. From almost every corner there have gone up cries of suffering and virtually despairing petition. And having thought momentarily on just these few facts and contrasts, one goes on soberly and a little fearfully toward a new year. At least the gates of hell shall not prevail!

Retrospect

THE STORIES of police brutality which occasionally disturb the civilized newspaper reader invariably prompt one question: What is the cause of this particular type of outrage? Is it corruption or abuse in a given police system, is it political connivance or official stupidity, which permits or incites the shocking spectacle of a sworn maintainer of the law turning lawless in public? That is what it is really important, in each case, to know. And that is also what it is important for New York citizens to know in the recent somewhat parallel case of the almost incredible attack upon a subway traveler by two Interborough subway guards. In the presence of many hundreds of witnesses this man was dragged to a locker room and ferociously beaten, on the charge of having tried to use a counterfeit coin in the turnstile. It is a pleasure to record that a very considerable number of the witnesses instantly presented themselves at the nearest police station to demand the arrest of the assailants; and that, failing to obtain satisfaction there, they pushed the matter with the public prosecutor, and obtained the desired result. But this fine promptitude of a random body of the citizenry is not the main point of this paragraph. That point, to repeat, is the question: what is really behind such an extraordinary occurrence? Assuming, purely for argument, that the passenger was guilty, as charged: what relation is there between that fact and what followed? If this was merely a case of individual guards going berserk on their own private hook because someone tried to cheat the utility employing them of a nickel, then the processes now in train will take care of the matter. But does it actually reflect something else? The problem of preventing a multiplicity of such tiny frauds is admittedly a very real one in the case of a tremendous subway system. If this particular system solves that problem by permitting its guards to do execution upon suspect with their own brand of martial law, that is a dangerous kind of lawlessness, and it is to be hoped the forthcoming trial will expose it.

Question of Importance

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TO A MEXICAN DICTATOR

By MYLES MUREDACH

American Catholics have observed with profound sorrow and great sympathy the recrudescence of persecution in Mexico. While giving heed to the manner in which actual events are shaping themselves, it is above all necessary to be mindful of the central issue. This has been stated in the following paper with what seems to us quite unusual effectiveness. We find ourselves hoping that it may receive especially wide reading and consideration. Nothing could be better just now than remembering Father Pro.—The Editors.

GENERAL: You have been the heart and brains of a revolution that has changed your country. You have, more than any other man, been the operator of the machine that worked the changes out. By them you have become the richest man in Mexico and one of the richest men in the world. You have made others rich as well as yourself. You have gained the success that was your dream. Of no man with greater truth can the world say: Here really is one of my most successful men.

Now comes a report, corroborated somewhat by late photographs, that your worldly career may be nearing its end. Your name still stands for absolute rule in Mexico, though another has the appearance, but your thoughts are on your physical condition. You are worn with worry over it, and with good reason. Is the last milestone really in sight? Has the Inevitable shown itself to you at close range? The red hand of power may soon enough become a symbol of weakness, unable even to brush an impertinent fly from off a worn, thin face, stamped with the seal of death. The grim Destroyer lays his cold grasp upon many a busy heart, forever chilling it into an eternal quiet. It takes courage beyond the physical to think of that, General. Can you do it?

If you can, will you from a vantage ground you never knew before, that of a man about to lose all he spent a life fighting to gain, do something else? Will you try to weigh the results justly and decide if they were worth what they cost?

You said that in all you did you were fighting for your country, for its prosperity, for the happiness of its people, for its permanent peace. Have the courage to admit that the objective was not reached. Your country has become a contemptible thing standing for repression and tyranny. You fought against one who occupied Mexico's presidential chair because you said he was a dictator, but if he had committed a crime against democracy and constitutional right, then you yourself did not hesitate to duplicate that crime. He openly relied on the force of arms to hold power. You did likewise. He manipulated elections to defeat the will of the people. So did you. For him might was right. For you also. Twist and turn this as you will, in an effort to explain the unexplainable, and the same result shows. If he was wrong, you were wrong. If a dictatorship was a necessity in Mexico, why did you kill one only to set yourself up as another? You did not help the good name of your country in thus acting. You only smirched it worse than ever.

What came of it all? Under the dictator who took his broken body to France to die in exile, Mexico was as crimeless as any nation on earth, advancing in education and winning its way. Under you as dictator, open or hidden, its own newspapers chronicle the worst series of murders, plunders, suicides, etc., since the days when the first revolutionary standard was raised, and the prisons vomited forth their scum in the name of liberty. Are you proud of your work for your country, General?

That is not all. It is axiomatic in the democracy we know that one sacred right cannot be violated without shaming as well as nullifying all. It is the paramount right, that of conscience. When every other right is lost, men have been known to console themselves by the thought that at least they were permitted to worship God as their consciences dictated. For, when every other liberty was denied them, a people could always find solace before the altars they built in the face of heaven, and from them send the incense of their prayers and hopes toward the throne of Justice Eternal. From a worldly point of view liberty of conscience is not much to give. Most politicians feel safe enough in according it. It leaves them their spoils, while saving them from the bitterest hatred of those they mistreat, misrule and rob. You were not one of these semi-wise tyrants. You took away from the Mexican people, as far as you could, their last melancholy consolation. With the bitterness of the apostate you silenced the voice of prayer and desecrated the sanctuary. Even the narrow abodes of the dead were not spared the ruthless blows you struck at the most fundamental right of human beings. And the people you thus scourged, General, was your own.

As you come close to the gate of death, have you the courage to look back at the second slaughter of the innocents in the history of the human race? Do not be afraid at least to look

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at it, for it was your own work. Herod only put children to the sword. You, General, in the name of education, did this thing that was worse: you put them to public shame. Your minister of education stripped them naked before their companions to instruct them in the ways of gross licentiousness. True, the same was done in pagan days, General, but only in secret, forbidden and shameful places. No state ever did it, until your shameless satellite dared thus, by force of law, to outrage the modesty that was one of the enduring charms of the Mexican people.

Shall I ask you how you kept your promises of free elections? No, for the whole world knows, as you know, that the Mexican people, deprived long before you of liberty of choice in the name of liberty, did not regain it at the hands of the one—yourself—who had sworn to be faithful to their ideals and make them free. You may, of course, urge excuses, but which of these excuses was not also that of the rulers you put down in order to take their red places?

Are you satisfied with your friends, General, as you look back, if your courage is still great enough for that? They, like you, cried out to the world that they were noble idealists. They, like you, proclaimed themselves champions of the poor. They, like you, said that the rich land of Mexico should belong to the Mexican people. Alas, General, these your friends, who never earned a peso by honest labor after they had enlisted with you, are in descending degrees only less rich than yourself. They are the shareholders in state-favored monopolies. They are the landowners whose estates alone are safe from confiscation. But they are not your friends. Your many houses are guarded, not against those you robbed, but against those who robbed with you. The near approach of death alone will justify the removal of your guards. For years you have protected yourself from the fate of Carranza, Villa and Madero, but every bullet marked for you was in the gun of a former friend. Who can you trust, General? Only Death.

General, you may have a tomb like that of Juarez. They may even lay you away in a sacred place, as they have laid the skulls of three of your predecessors on an altar. Sacred places have no arms with which to defend themselves against sacrilege. But be sure of this: As in Rome people point to a spot near the Place of the Poplars as one accursed by the body of Nero, so the Mexican people will point to the place where your worn-out body will lie, and no one who has read the history of your rule in Mexico will speak with reverence of your deeds. The world of the future will refer to you in the same accusing whisper that it uses for the names of Robespierre, Cromwell, Tiberius and Caligula. And you will then have no power to strike them down for their temerity, for you will have no riches with which to pay assassins, no train of sycophants to make corpses of your accusers. You will be dead, General, and such as you, who had no real friends in life, will have none to say even a little word for them dead.

Perhaps I am in that mistaken? Yes, I am sure that I am. Let me recall a scene in the world tragedy of your public career. An innocent man was in prison under a charge that no one better than you knew to be false. Without trial and without warning you had him marched out of his cell into the sunshine to face his murderers. At your order he was placed against a stone wall already chipped by former showers of bullets. With his arms extended he welcomed the only bride he could have in this world. You shot him, General, shot him down like a dog because you hated the mercy and kindness that he lived and the Christ in Whose name he lived them. But you did a great thing for Mexico that day, General, even though you did not know the mysterious ways of God that draw good out of evil. You gave Mexico a new martyr and you gave to Mexicans a saintly ambassador in the court of the Most High King.

General, you are a Mexican. The dead priest was of your people, more bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh than yourself. Father Pro died for them as well as for his faith. And when he died he took with him into the eternity you soon may enter all that mercy and kindness he had in life. So, if every other soul in the Kingdom of God turns from your dying bed with horror, as they well might do, General, one soul would still stay to pray for you to the end—the soul of the martyr whose name you wrote in red gold on the records of the Mexican nation.

Love Song

No cosmic scheme
Is more vital than
The plot and plan
Of a happy dream.

No structured tower
Can be builded higher
Than the green spire
Of a growing flower.

In stellar space
Where is sun so bright
As young delight
In a lovely face?

What gift of fame
Can reward so well
As what you tell
When you say my name!

CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN.

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COSMIC GODS

By FULTON J. SHEEN

THERE is a fashion in gods as there is a fashion in clothes. In the days of Comte, God was the God of sociologists, or "society divinized"; in the heyday of biology, God became identified with "universal becoming," and the *"élan vital"*; when psychology became popular, God was made a "sublimated libido" or a "mental projection." Now the fashionable science is physics, and God is made to dance to the tune piped by those who have otherwise done so much to give us an understanding of the universe.

In order to understand the cosmic gods of the new physics, one must understand the problem they have to solve. Modern physics is very fond of reminding us that there is a vast difference between the world of scientific observation and the world of ordinary sense experience. Eddington, for example, tells us that when he sat down to write his book, he had before him two tables: one the table of ordinary sense experience which was substantial and solid; the other the table of scientific experience which is "mostly emptiness" and which is not substantial at all, but only a mass of electric forces. What is true of the table viewed from two different points of view is true of the universe. The layman lives in a material world of things; the physicist lives in a world in which there are no things, but only "potentials" and "influences" and "symbols." The conclusions of physics are not conclusions about real things but about "abstracted aspects of them." The selection of these abstracted aspects is determined in part at least by the physicist. There is no reason to believe that anything corresponding to these abstracted aspects should exist outside the physicists' minds. In other words, physics deals not with the real, but with the symbolic, world, and these symbols do not bring us in touch with the ordinary world of sense experience. They have meaning only in terms of each other. As Sir James Jeans has said: "The physicist has no means of probing beneath the symbolism."

This divergence between the two worlds, one the world our eyes see, the other the world of mathematical symbols, is the basis of the new cosmic gods. Most modern physicists have an incurable itch to philosophize, and their problem is: how reconcile these two worlds? God is the answer. The purpose of God is to unite the disparate, to organize the disjointed, and to forge the separate. Not all physicists, of course, are agreed on the details of how God unites these two worlds, hence there are as many gods as there are physicists. The following are samples from the pantheon of mathematical physics.

Professor Alfred North Whitehead of Harvard, who could be the clearest exponent of the new mathematical philosophy, but who is actually the vaguest, tells us that God is the being who applies the possibilities of mathematical forms and symbols to reality. The mathematical world of physics, like the ideal world of Plato, is full of "forms" which can be realized and made concrete in an orderly fashion. It is the business of God to apply these "abstract forms to reality" and in this sense God is the "principle of concretion" or the "harmony of epochal occasions." Lest one should be tempted to believe that this idea approaches the scholastic notion of God who is the identical with the archetypal ideas, it is worth emphasizing that Professor Whitehead denies (a) that God is transcendent to the universe, but organic with it, (b) that "God is not in all respects infinite," and (c) that He is free from the struggle against evil.

Another cosmic god who helps reconcile the two worlds of sense experience and mathematical symbolism has been begotten of the brain of Professor Henry Nelson Wieman of the University of Chicago. For Dr. Wieman, God is an "interaction" of the two worlds, but (a) He is not personal, (b) nor is He in perfect existence, but like the cosmic god of Professor Whitehead is "partly in existence and partly in possibility."

Sir James Jeans, like the foregoing, insists that the distinction between the two worlds must disappear. His cosmic god, however, differs from that of Professor Whitehead. For the latter, God is not transcendental to the world process, but is immanent in it, as a mediator who bridges the gulf between the abstract and the concrete. Sir James Jeans, on the contrary, denies ultimately the distinction between the abstract and concrete, and asserts that God is not necessary to bridge the gulf but merely to serve as the mathematical science of the universe. As Bertrand Russell describes his theory: "The quasi-permanence which we observe in the external world is due to the fact that God keeps thinking about things for quite a long time. Material objects do not cease to exist when no human being is looking at them because God is looking at them all the time, or rather, because they are thoughts in His mind all the time." In other words, God is, in the language of Sir James Jeans, "a pure mathematician."

Finally Professor Alexander of the University of Manchester, England, coins a cosmic god to

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take care of the two realms of symbols and the concrete by assuming that God is the "whole universe striving toward idea. As actual, God does not possess the quality of deity, but is the universe tending to quality. . . . He is, therefore, in the strictest sense, not a creator but a creature."

What is interesting about these cosmic gods is not so much that they are still in the realm of possibility, but rather that they are deities coined to solve the difficulties of the physicists. The God the physicist is seeking is not the ultimate reason of the universe, but the God who helps solve their problem of knowledge concerning the relation between the concrete world and the mathematical world. His task seems to be no higher than to take care of the difficulties which the minds of the physicists cannot solve. In this respect, they are like the physicists and philosophers of the Newtonian era. Newton's law of gravitation explained everything except two things: (1) why fixed stars did not fall; (2) why some planets running in one circle and comets running in other circles did not collide. Newton's answer was that God takes care of these two details of the universe. This was equivalent to saying that the business of God was to look after the irregularities which fell outside the law of gravitation. God was thus reduced to a kind of cosmic plumber whose supreme task was to mend the leaks in an otherwise perfect Newtonian universe. The natural effect was to banish God from science entirely, for as soon as the irregularities of the universe were reduced to law, then God was no longer needed. Deists then logically concluded that God is an "absentee landlord" and the universe runs very well without Him.

Our new cosmic gods are like the Newtonian god. They solve the difficulties the physicists themselves cannot solve. He reconciles the things they divorce and joins their world of symbols to the concrete world of every-day experience. This is all very well; but suppose science ceases to be idealistic, suppose it soon comes to recognize, as someone tried to point out in a book entitled "Philosophy of Science," that mathematical physics is not a science of symbols, but a science of reality, that while its *form* is drawn from mathematics, its *matter* is drawn from physics; suppose that their problems of knowledge could be solved by some realism—as it can be—then what will happen to the cosmic gods? They will vanish like the god of Newton. They served their purpose and they will be dropped and forgotten.

It is well then not to become tremendously excited when mathematical-physicists talk about God as "the harmony of epochal occasions," or "the pure mathematician," for He is only a temporary solution. Cosmical gods are comical gods. Such scientists say that the scholastic God is "anthropomorphic" because made to the image and likeness of man, but they forget they are making their god "physico-morphic" or made to the image and likeness of physics. Furthermore, in these days which try the souls of men, when civilization is in the state of mortal sin, men need to pray, and they cannot pray to an "interaction" or a "principle of concretion." A God who is interested more in mathematical-physics than in hearts, and more in geometrics than in souls, is not the God that saves, and it is the God Who saves that the world needs today.

RADIO AND THE POET

By A. M. SULLIVAN

THE ENJOYMENT of poetry at one time was wholly auditory. Until the advent of the printing press, the poet chanted his poems in the courts of the kings, or along the roadsides. The pleasure derived through the eye was the complementary delight of seeing the court bard and his pompous retinue, or the glad smile of the troubadour as he rapped at the gate and offered to say a poem or two for his supper. The poets were personal salesmen—some clever enough to win the plaudits and coins of the royal family, others too sharp of tongue or knavish at heart to share the bounty of the chieftains.

Such has been the experience of all nations with a culture. The Homeric bards had no books to circulate, and the king who had a manuscript counted the parchment with his treasure. The oriental poets were men of privilege and immunity, and they were also found in the inner council of the king. The bardic system of the Gaels has its roots in the eastern culture, and the ollav ranked next to the druid; the ollav being the poet of great wisdom and technical skill.

Movable type, invented in the sixteenth century, gradually effected a change in the sensory enjoyment of poetry. In the poem that is read aloud the music is dominant, but as use of the printing press spread, the poet injected philosophy with story-telling, and mixed wisdom with mysticism. Through leisure provided by Gutenberg and Caxton the educated person was enabled to give poetic statement a deeper analysis. Despite the millions of books of verse, and the vast number of poets who have crowded into classic ap-

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praisal since the making of the first press, there is always an audience for the poem which is read aloud.

Radio is ushering back the age of the troubadour. Every radio station has its staff bard who reads verse without much provocation, using contributed poems, clips from the newspapers and a shy verse of his own. Unfortunately, some of these readers are enamored of their own voices and use poetry as an exhibitionistic medium. They favor the "home and mother" rhymes which are too syrupy for a discriminating audience. The sentimentalists, however, offer evidence of a large following, and are truly indicative of the soft spot in the heart of the average human, no matter how stunned his imagination may be.

For a long time the radio station directors have been fearful of the "high brow" program, particularly in poetry. Conjuring in their brain the typical radio listener, they desired to strike an average of taste which would please all. Actually such a policy pleases no one, because there is no typical radio listener. He is as difficult to find as the typical Babbitt. People are selective in their choice of programs, and the dials spin on and off at the whim of the despotic listener. Poetry may have a minority audience, but it is a loyal and appreciative one.

Radio, except for the fine music and the occasional program of some esthetic pioneer, is the sport of the Philistines, who see it as the vaudeville booking agent sees the stage. His method has been to give as much cheap variety as possible and try to please everyone. This has been the accepted formula since Harrigan and Hart were the princes of 14th Street.

The poets deserve a place on the air programs, and they have a solid audience to follow them. Radio is a natural means for giving the neglected poets of yesterday and the poets of today a hearing, but it is important that the function of program arrangement be left to people who have the taste to choose and capacity to enjoy good poetry. It must be directed by men with courage to defy the tyranny of time in studios, so that the atmosphere of calm and leisure be given to the listener and poet. Studio managers will learn that speed is not the essence of esthetic pleasure.

Sooner or later radio will break the shackles of the vaudeville formula, and the creators of entertainment via the ether will understand that they have a totally different agency of expression. This much is certain. The man or woman in the armchair at home are in a different mood than the person who pays $3 for a theatre ticket. Their minds are relaxed and receptive to a more intimate style of social contact. There is no orchestra pit, and no stage. The artist, whether he be poet, singer or humorist, is a guest in a private home and is expected to conduct himself accordingly. He comes in by special invitation and goes out without apology, never knowing that he may have offended good taste. In any event, a touch of the finger will dismiss him, and he doesn't know the difference. Being a guest in a private home is more personal than speaking to the huge anonymity of a stage or concert audience. The radio listener is always singular, and speaking to one person calls for a friendly and casual manner. Those poets whom I have observed in the last two years were most successful who left their platform dignity at home. There is a quality of the X-ray in the loudspeaker, and the voice is a certain index of personality. Sincerity rides on simple statement. It often intrigues a listener who accidentally stumbles on a poetry program, and makes a convert.

The bards of the courts of Babylon and Egypt, the bards who gathered at the Olympic games to read their poems in the contests, the bards of Erin who wrote in the elaborate meters of the Gaelic language and competed for prizes at the annual Feis, were given great honor; but their listeners were merely a handful compared to the thousands of poetry lovers who are eager to hear the living voice of the poet. Spelling-bees, elocution competitions and singing contests are heard over the air waves now. Why not poetry? There is no valid objection to a bardic revival with such an instrument as radio ready to provide a listener for the worthy poet. The little poetry journals are doing a valiant work, but their circulation is a few hundred in the average, and even *Poetry,* the first voice to cry out in the wilderness, has but a few thousand readers after twenty years of heroic effort. The little magazines have been the trade publications for journeymen and apprentice poets, and radio could be helpful in widening their sphere of influence.

The troubadour is coming back to his own and radio is his genie. But radio offers little to the poets who have only literary conundrums to offer. The ear cannot compete with the eye in the understanding of profound verse. The ear is attuned to music, and is a tardy herald for difficult messages. The poets who prefer to mystify their readers, leaving a faint trail and confusing clues, will have to be satisfied with a small coterie. I suspect that some of these anchorites of poetry prefer to be misunderstood, and hope some day to see their poems published with a concordance which explains each cabalistic reference.

Meanwhile, there is a growing audience for good poetry. It will grow as adventurous listeners, spinning their dials, encounter a wandering bard here and there, and find in him a prophet, unknown perhaps, but not entirely without honor, when his voice may probe through vast cubic acres of sky and bring pleasure to followers of the muse.

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SOME NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

By KARL F. HERZFELD

I HAVE been asked by the editors to describe the work of some of the theoretical physicists who have received the Nobel Prize in recent years. The prize is named after Alfred Nobel, who had amassed a fortune by the manufacture of explosives. He donated a great sum of money to the Swedish Academy of Sciences to award yearly one prize each in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and work for peace, each prize amounting to about $40,000. Each year the academy corresponds with experts in the fields mentioned above, in the various universities and scientific institutions throughout the world, and acts on their advice.

Originally the prize in physics was always given for work in experimental physics, and it was only the ever-increasing importance of the theoretical work that has morally forced the academy to award also prizes to a line of theoretical men. All of these were concerned with the development of the quantum theory, the other great theoretical achievement of modern times besides the theory of relativity. In many respects the former is of even greater influence than the latter. While the theory of relativity gives a rather formal frame into which the whole physical world fits, it makes itself strongly felt mainly in big-scale phenomena. But the quantum theory permeates the most minute structure of matter and determines the very existence of the atoms and, with them, of the chemical elements, by regulating the possible states of the constituent particles.

The man who first discovered (in 1900) the quantum theory, and was the first theorist to receive (in 1920) the Nobel Prize, was Max Planck. Born in Kiel in Prussia in 1858, he comes from a long line of savants. His father was professor of jurisprudence. He studied physics in Munich, became privat-docent in Munich, later professor in Kiel and was, from 1892 to his retirement in 1926, professor at the University of Berlin. He has been secretary (president) of the Prussian Academy, and has had many honors heaped upon him. Planck is one of the few men in whom everybody has absolute trust, of a deeply ingrained honesty and absolute fairness, in manner and character a great gentleman, of an unswerving devotion to duty, in short, one of the best examples of the Prussian upper classes.

It was his interest in the theory of heat and an attempt to apply it not only to material bodies but also to light that led him to the quantum theory. It was acknowledged since the development of the electromagnetic theory of light through Maxwell, Lorentz and Drude that light was emitted by the vibrations of the particles constituting material bodies, for example, a glowing piece of coal. On the other hand, the kinetic theory had shown that the temperature of a body was directly proportional to the kinetic energy of its particles. It followed then (as deduced by Planck, Rayleigh and Jeans) that the amount of light emitted should also be proportional to the temperature. While this deduction agrees quite well with experiment for high temperatures and long (infra-red) waves, it is obviously wrong for ordinary light and the available temperatures.

The temperatures in physics are counted in degrees centigrade and from absolute zero, which is 273° below the freezing point of water. Now a piece of coal 1227° hot (or 1227 + 273 = 1500° absolute) glows very brightly. According to the theory, a reduction to 500° absolute should reduce the light to only one-third, but in fact there is no observable glow (this is at 227°C = 500 — 273 in the usual expression), which must be a reduction in light intensity of surely more than 10,000 times. Something was wrong, but what? Planck went systematically through the theory, comparing it with the measurements, and found the revolutionary result: One could get agreement, if one assumed that the particles could not change their energy continuously but only in definite lumps or quanta. The light which they emitted at the expense of their internal energy would not be emitted continuously, but in these quanta. The amount of energy in such a quantum is given by the product of a universal constant, called *h*, which has a value given by Planck numerically, times the frequency of the vibration emitting the light. Of course the quanta are so small that they cannot be seen separately. E. g., a candle at a distance of 100 m sends into the eye 30,000,000 quanta per second. But in a photographic plate under the action of weak light, each grain is blackened by one quantum.

There was almost general rejection by the experimentalists, who mistrusted the kinetic theory. But in 1905 Einstein showed that the quantum theory explained the so-called photoelectric effect, in which single electrons (elementary particles of negative electric charge) are driven out by light exactly according to the law the quantum theory would predict. Here we have single phenomena, not a lot of processes in bulk, so that the former excuse is invalid.

I have described this and other contributions of Einstein, who received the Nobel Prize in 1921,

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in a former article in THE COMMONWEAL (February 4 and 11, 1931) and will not repeat it here.

The next big step in the application of the quantum theory was its use in the explanation of spectra and the structure of the atoms by the Danish physicist, Niels Bohr (Nobel Prize, 1922). His father, Christian Bohr, was a professor of physiology at the University of Copenhagen. After taking his Doctor's degree at the University of Copenhagen, Niels Bohr took a position as lecturer at the University of Manchester under Ernest (now Lord) Rutherford, twice a Nobel Prize winner, who has contributed enormously from the experimental side to our knowledge of the structure of matter.

Rutherford had shown, by shooting charged particles through matter, that atoms are made up of a very small positively charged nucleus which contains almost the entire mass of the atom, surrounded by a number of (negatively charged) much lighter electrons. These must, under the action of electric attraction which acts according to laws similar to those of gravitation, move around the nucleus like planets around a sun, in circles or ellipses. This idea, however, seemed to have a flaw. Being electrically charged, these electrons ought to emit light, lose energy by that process and fall within a very short time into the nucleus, thereby ending the existence of the atom.

Bohr recognized (1913) that an application of the quantum idea could evade this difficulty because, according to it, the atom could not lose energy continuously, but only in definite amounts. Therefore, there exists for every atom a stable state of smallest energy and there is no possibility of a further collapse. Each atom has then a definite size and definite properties. Two other fundamental explanations of well-known facts were deduced by Bohr from his theory: first, he could give the beginnings of a rational theory of chemistry, and second, he could explain spectra. The facts of inorganic chemistry had been represented in 1871 by the Russian chemist, Mendeleyeff, in the "periodic system of elements." He had found that if the elements were arranged according to their weight, their properties were repeated periodically. Bohr ascribed the chemical properties to the arrangement and motions of the outermost electrons, and explained the periodic system of the elements by an arrangement of the electrons in successive "shells," so that after the completion of a shell the next shell is built up step by step with a similar structure. This explanation has since been much elaborated and proved.

Even more convincing than the explanation of the periodic system, because much more exacting quantitatively, was his solution of the old riddle of spectra. Since Newton showed in 1672 how to decompose white light through a prism into a colored band, a spectrum, all kinds of light sources have been investigated in this way. It was found that while most glowing solid and molten substances emitted all colors (a continuous band of colors in the prism or a "continuous spectrum"), hot gases or gases under the influence of an electric discharge emit only certain sharply defined colors or "spectral lines." In 1860-1862 Kirchhoff and Bunsen found that each element gave a quite characteristic spectrum; they founded "spectrum analysis" which permits, for example, by investigating the light coming from the sun and stars the determination without doubt of the chemical constitution of at least their outer layers. Since that time a very great number of precision measurements had been performed on the "spectra" of the elements. For example, for the light emitted by iron vapor (i. e., by a spark between iron electrodes) the wave lengths of at least 10,000 lines had been measured with an accuracy of about 1 in 100,000 or 1,000,000. But nobody knew why iron emitted just these lines, although many theories had been proposed. In the case of the simplest spectrum, that emitted by hydrogen (the lightest gas) under the influence of a strong electric spark, the Swiss physicist Balmer had given empirically in 1885 a simple formula representing the measurements accurately. But now Bohr suddenly had a theory of line spectra. If the atom could change its energy only by definite quanta of energy, calculable from the structure of the atom, if this energy was emitted as light and if, according to Planck and Einstein, the energy of the quantum was equal to a constant times the frequency of the light, this latter (and with it the wave length, i. e., color) could be calculated directly from the structure of the atom, i. e., the nature of the emitting element. This Bohr proceeded to do for hydrogen, using only data resulting from quite different (for example, electrical) experiments. He so deduced without further special assumption Balmer's formula, which represents the measurements of about 30 lines with an accuracy of 1 in 1,000,000.

From then on—although somewhat hampered by the war—a rapid development set in. Bohr's idea immediately permitted the understanding of older experiments by R. W. Wood on "resonance radiation." His predictions on the excitation of light were soon proved by Franck and Hertz.

The simple ideas on the origin of spectra were applied to X-rays by Moseley, Sommerfeld and Kossel, to more complicated atoms by Sommerfeld and his students, with the result that the vast amount of experimental material that had lain ready, hinting at an order not yet discovered, fell into place and permitted a connecting up of this order with the structure of the atom emitting the spectral lines. But even the more complicated spectra, emitted not by free atoms but by the molecules of chemical compounds, yielded to a

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theoretical treatment based on Bohr's ideas, inaugurated by Hörlund, Lenz, Kratzer, so that now it is possible to calculate, with a high degree of accuracy, the minute distances of the atoms forming a molecule, to determine the internal arrangement of complicated molecules, and so on. However, this rapid development was nearing an end after about twelve years. Around 1923 the limits of the theory began to be visible.

Then from 1924-1929 a new development set in, based on fundamentally new ideas which overcame the earlier obstacles. It is bound up with the names of Prince Louis-Victor de Broglie (Nobel Prize, 1929), Schrödinger, Heisenberg, Dirac (jointly Nobel Prizes of 1932 and 1933). De Broglie has been treated in THE COMMONWEAL of January 15, 1930. Schrödinger was born in Vienna in 1887; his father had a factory for linoleum rugs, but was much interested in botany and spent his spare time at the Botanical Laboratories of the University of Vienna. His mother was English. He entered the University of Vienna in 1906 and took his Ph. D. in 1910. When I entered the university he was just doing his military service, becoming, after that, assistant and privat-docent in Vienna. He then served in the Austrian artillery in the war, after which followed the usual wandering characteristic of a German university career: University of Jena, Institute of Technology of Stuttgart, University of Zurich, and finally Planck's successor in Berlin. Since 1933 he has been at the University of Oxford, and he was in this country in 1927 and 1934.

W. Heisenberg was born in 1901. His father, of Westphalian stock, was professor of Byzantine Greek at the University of Munich and a great authority in his field. He entered the university in 1920 and came under the stimulating influence of Sommerfeld. When he was only twenty-three years of age he had already published a paper showing much originality and a great command of mathematics. He then went to Göttingen, returned to Munich to take his Ph. D., went for a year to Bohr, and finally became privat-docent in Göttingen, to be called at the age of twenty-eight as full professor to Leipzig, where he still is. He spent half a year in 1929 at the University of Chicago. His early fame has not gone to his head. If you meet him on a hiking tour, he looks exactly like a nice peasant boy. He plays the piano beautifully, especially Bach and Beethoven.

Dirac was born in 1902 of French-Swiss parents. He became fellow of St. John's College in Cambridge, and a professorship was specially created for him at Cambridge University last year. He was in this country in 1929 and 1933.

The difficulties which stood in the way of further progress of the "old quantum theory" were essentially threefold. In the first place, for more complicated atoms, the results of the calculations in their finer details did not agree with the measurements. Secondly, the more esthetic difficulty, that the quantum theory was, so to speak, tacked on externally to classical physics, which in itself forms a finished system. Thirdly, and most fundamentally, the apparent contradiction between the two results: the old wave theory of light, thousandfold, it seemed, proved by experiment, according to which light spreads out like a far-extending wave, and on the other side, the quantum theory, according to which the light-energy is concentrated in indivisble packets, the quanta, this view too based on a set of otherwise inexplicable experiments.

The first two difficulties were removed by two papers, one by Heisenberg in 1925 (he was twenty-four years of age at that time) and one by Schrödinger in 1926. These developed two theories, i. e., equations, which appeared at first to be quite different in external form as well as in underlying ideas. The first, built up by Heisenberg with the collaboration of Born, is an application of abstract mathematical methods to ideas of Bohr; the latter is based on new ideas of De Broglie. Later on, however, it was shown that they were equivalent ways of expressing the same thing. In them, the quantum theory and the rest of mechanics form an organic whole, and the results deduced agree with experiment, thereby doing away with the first two objections.

The last and most striking difficulty was approached in 1924 in a very important paper by De Broglie who, instead of solving it in the special case of light, suggested that it was to be encountered similarly in what we usually call matter. That is, he suggested that material particles were "knots" in a field of "guiding waves." Therefore not only light but also matter should exhibit wave properties, these however being appreciable only in the very lightest particles (electrons and atoms). Very soon, experimenters were able to confirm this prediction. Davison and Germer in this country, G. P. Thompson in England, and then many others showed that streams of electrons (negatively charged, very light elementary particles) showed diffraction and interference, the phenomena which had been used as the strongest proof of the wave nature of light; O. Stern, then in Hamburg, now in Pittsburgh, did the same for hydrogen atoms. Refraction, similar to that of light in a prism, was also discovered.

The main problem was then attacked. Bohr had emphasized for a long time that perhaps our usual concepts of localization, etc., were not applicable in the description of the most intimate atomic phenomena. Then Heisenberg discovered the "principle of indeterminacy." Any observation, of course, somewhat disturbs the observed thing. But—proceeded the older reasoning of physicists—it is simple, at least in the imagina-

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tion, to make the illumination necessary for observation weaker and weaker and therefore the disturbance smaller and smaller. The quantum theory, however, says that you cannot make the light weaker than one quantum. Therefore each observation produces at least a certain disturbance below which it is fundamentally impossible to go. Hence it is impossible to predict exactly the path of a particle, because if we try to determine it point after point, each determination means an unpredictable disturbance.

Based on these ideas, Dirac has then, starting with 1926, developed a consistent theory. This theory introduces quite a number of new concepts and is couched in very abstract terms. But in an entirely logical manner it erects a unified, systematic structure. At present again a certain stage of completion is reached and the development hesitates, confronted by new problems, the necessity of the inclusion of the theory of relativity and of the electric charge into the system. Attempts by Dirac have already yielded astonishing results apparently confirmed by experiment.

It might be permitted to add to the foregoing a few observation of educational policy that ought to be of interest to those to whose care the development of Catholic scientists is intrusted.

The first point is the very early age at which these men found their most fundamental results. Planck and Schrödinger, the men who were oldest at that time, were forty-two and thirty-nine respectively, Einstein was twenty-six, Bohr twenty-eight, Heisenberg twenty-four, Dirac twenty-four, at the time their fundamental papers on quantum theory appeared. Nor is this a new phenomenon. Newton was twenty-nine when he discovered refraction, forty-four when he made the discovery of gravitation, Galileo nineteen when he discovered the laws of the pendulum.

In the case of the above-mentioned Nobel Prize winners at least, this early age did not mean a neglect of general education. I know that Planck, Einstein, Schrödinger, Heisenberg, have gone through a classical German or Austrian gymnasium with at least eight years of Latin and five or six of Greek. It means, however, that they were already early interested in their fields, that in their most important formative years from eighteen to twenty-two, they could devote themselves entirely to physics and mathematics.

Secondly, contrary to fond belief, all of them have gone through the regular university channels; what is even more important, the majority come from "academic" parents (Planck's, Heisenberg's, Bohr's fathers being university professors, De Broglie's much older brother an excellent physicist, Schrödinger's father a botanist). This tends to draw the young man's interest away from the usual chase after money and puts him into a home where intellectual interests predominate.

AT THE CONVENT GATE

By SISTER MONICA

THE NIGHT of Corpus Christi falls on a May evening blue and tender. We pass through our flagged courtyard, through our terraced garden. Florence spreads out to the right far beneath us, a broad deep expanse of a thousand electric lights, while to the left rises the olive-girt hill with trailing fireflies in grey gloom. My foot kicks a pebble or two on the dusty path. We open the postern gate and take our stand within, behind a shoulder of rock giving on the narrow steep street, high-walled, that leads to the Piazza of Fiesole. Somewhere up yonder is the belfry of the ancient Duomo, ancestress of all Tuscany. It is that enchanting moment when evening ends and night comes on.

Down the street toward us a group of black figures approach, bearing a tall black standard and a bier. Slowly the villagers assemble in small groups to wait against the high wall opposite this house of the poor at the convent gate, where a young woman of twenty-six has died of consumption, bidding her mother, "Don't sell the things in the house for my funeral: just let them bury me!" We can see by lights in the upper room of the house the bare raftered ceiling, and we wonder what is left to sell where there is none but a decrepit mother and the father, a plasterer, long, long out of work.

Here Sister Kevin has for days been nursing and comforting as she could the woman whose grief expressed itself from time to time in bursts of wild cries.

"She was six and twenty, the girl was," related Sister Kevin, "and I could not keep the mother still. She gave one of those awful yells just as the soul left the body. . . . Yes, the priest was there and gave the girl the sacraments. . . . She was bed-ridden four months. . . ."

Tonight the Misericordia take her to lie in the cemetery chapel until morning's interment. The funeral, by Tuscan custom, takes place at nightfall when the men are free from work. The black-hooded Brethren carry long metal sticks wrapped in tar-soaked cloth, which, burning, give out a molten yellow light, streaming sparks. About a dozen wait at the gate while the leaders go on into the house. Figures move before the lighted upper window.

Sister Kevin, her part done, has said her night prayers in the convent behind us, and is preparing for bed. This evening the Misericordia take up where she left off. The big torches sputter and flare and throw broad shafts of golden light up the moldering rocky walls and up and down the steep hill to our right; tall cypresses behind the walls point black to the stars; a faint smell of lilies from the garden adds its subtle note. We stand in the shadow of the garden gate and wait. Swiftly, silently, the black figures come out of the house, white surplices gleaming—two there are—for many priests serve in the Brotherhood; the burden in its dark pall seems lightly borne on the men's shoulders. There is no chanting. The villagers fall into line and in the flare of a dozen torches the little pageant sweeps up the steep street to disappear into the night.

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There is the real Catholic Action. ". . . To comfort the sorrowful; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive injuries; to visit the sick; to bury the dead. . . ." Is not that the way our catechism runs, with those seven heavenly Corporal Works of Mercy? Where is the money that could buy what these people gave? What multimillionaires, hiring the pomp of a funeral for their only daughter, could buy what this couple receive in sincere sympathy and kindly aid from those men, who, without one cent of pay, assemble after their day's labor, mask their faces so you cannot tell aristocrat from plowman, and help their bereaved fellow mortals? Yes; this is Catholic Action that began in 1250, and has come down from father to son ever since, steadily, through the centuries.

Down in Florence, in the Duomo Piazza, is the headquarters of the Misericordia, just where it has been these four centuries. Ah, but you should see their up-to-date motor ambulances, grey, with the monogram, "F M," and a cross between; for this Misericordia is distinctively Florentine; nowhere else in the world will you find it. Three ambulances wait at the door ready to start for instant service. In the office, behind a high, old-fashioned counter, several busy officials are giving directions to about twenty-five black-gowned members, who, *sans capouche,* permit us to survey their costume: a long, black, cotton, porter's tunic, open in front and belted, and a *capouche* which covers the face, leaving holes for the eyes. A black-gowned member who speaks French greets us and does the honors.

We gaze around. The office is neat as a pin. The walls are all lined with small, square, varnished doors, each numbered. And these? Oh, they are lockers for the uniforms: each man has his number; his name and number are on the register and he is summoned for service such a day, such an hour; he leaves his work, at the employer's expense—for the Misericordia is a civic pride! —dashes to the Piazza, to his locker, dons his regalia, and, rosary in hand, is ready for service.

Without one cent of pay, they care for the injured, carry the sick to the hospital, bury the dead; they visit the homes of the poor, do night nursing, give out food, clothes, money. Twice a day the Misericordia bell tolls the summons to duty; emergency calls are tolled once; twice if for sick; three times for a death. Assembled in the robing room, the twelve on regular duty dress at a signal from the head *Capo di Guardia;* they recite a brief prayer, take up the litter, and depart.

"If you come back at six this evening," says our host, "you will see the funeral of a member. He died at the hospital, whither nowadays we take all our sick; and we shall have services in our chapel here, followed by interment in our own cemetery."

We look up above the lockers at the rows of marble memorials. They record generations of benefactors. Outside on the street-wall we had noticed a box for offerings.

"You wish to visit the chapel?"

"Oh yes; is the Blessed Sacrament here?"

"Yes, yes, of course. And over the altar you will notice a lunette of Andrea della Robbia. . . . Do you like it?"

Even Andrea della Robbia then was a member, and wore the gown and cowl?

"Yes, and many another."

The chapel is simple and interesting; with its stalls around the walls it serves for a chapter-house as well. A double door opens into the Piazza. In the center waits a catafalque with four candlesticks. Eight torches are carried for a *Capo di Guardia;* six for a *Giornante* (a day-server); four for *Stracciafogli* (novices).

"You have Masses here?"

"Yes; many."

He leads us into another room. The one we had seen outside, he explains, was for ordinary members, 4,000 in all. "But this is for the full-fledged members and officers: seventy-two in honor of Christ's seventy-two disciples! See the list on the wall with the locker numbers. See the Cardinal there; and the King! Among the *Capo di Guardia* there are fourteen nobles, twenty-four priests, twenty-eight citizens. All others are *Aggregati,* except perhaps some honorary members."

We are shown the famous statue of Saint Sebastian, their patron, wrought centuries ago by Benedetto da Majano. Tobias, too, is one of their patrons. On St. Sebastian's day, January 20, after the grand high Mass, they distribute to the Brotherhood little bread-cakes, blessed—*panellini*—to show they are all one family. On that feast day, if you are a member, you may borrow money gratis! The only receipt you have to give is to say, "God and Saint Sebastian will reward you!"

It was a porter that started all this: a humble porter named Pietro Bossi, who found a dead man lying unburied, one day in the thirteenth century, and set to work at once burying poor people. Then one and another joined him, high and low, rich and poor. They set up business in an old cellar; the archbishop and princes approved; time went on and many a legacy was left them. The city, the state, the nation, were proud of the Misericordia. By 1576 they came to their present quarters.

On duty they may not speak more than is necessary, nor recognize friends in the street. They may not accept any refreshment beyond a glass of water.

Throughout Tuscany, branch brotherhoods wear white, but if they carry an invalid to the hospital in Florence, they are met at the city gate by the regular black-clad Misericordia, who alone may officiate in this city. Traffic stops as they pass, though they move swiftly, unheeding. Each year they convey several thousand persons, and attend more than a thousand sick in homes, and watch six or seven hundred nights.

We Americans—could we have a Misericordia? Yes, perhaps—if we leave off the cowl, wear bright colors—and why not ring a bell as we go along, so the neighbors will be sure to see?

However, we have among us a brotherhood that is not so far behind. Go into the homely, dingy salesroom of our struggling St. Vincent de Paul Society, study the articles assembled there and the people who stream through to buy. One can draw some favorable comparisons.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—Three cardinals, nine archbishops and sixty-six bishops attended the General Meeting of the bishops of the United States held at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., November 14 and 15. * * * With the largest attendance of prelates in its history the American Board of Catholic Missions met at Chicago, November 21, to allot funds for home missions during the next twelve months. * * * Cardinal Schulte of Cologne, Germany, made an impressive appeal on Youth Sunday supporting the Catholic Youth Associations, whose existence is continually threatened by the "totalitarian" claims of the Hitler youth organizations. * * * Professor Étienne Gilson of the Sorbonne, noted Thomistic philosopher, delivered three lectures at the University of Notre Dame, November 21, 22 and 23, on "Scholasticism and Western Civilization." * * * The Holy Father praised the Catholic Truth Society of England on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary this month. The main object of this body of laymen, which now numbers 13,000 members, is the "production of good and cheap Catholic books in order, in the first place, to help Catholics to a better knowledge of their religion, and a deeper love of God, and, in the second place, to provide for non-Catholics simple explanations of Catholic doctrine." * * * The *Christian Century* of Chicago reports that the motion picture producers have now found that good pictures are surprisingly profitable, but expresses the opinion that if the Legion of Decency relaxes its vigilance, the producers will return to their former ways. * * * *La Vie Catholique* has announced a new history of the Church, modern in technique and spirit, in twenty-four volumes, under the general editorship of Monsignor Martin of the University of Strassburg and Professor Fliche of the University of Montpellier. Thirty historians of note are collaborating in this enterprise, the first volume of which, "The Primitive Church," will appear early next month.

The Nation.—The Chamber of Commerce of the United States, through a resolution unanimously adopted by its board of directors, pledged fullest cooperation with all other organizations in working out a program for an immediate acceleration of business, and the president of the chamber, Henry I. Harriman, was authorized to appoint a committee to plan specific action business might take. The purpose of this was especially to provide signs of increasing employment and purchasing power before Congress meets in January in the hope of averting unsound economic legislation which extremists might otherwise attempt to force through. * * * Subsequently the National Association of Manufacturers sent out a communication urging manufacturers to assemble at the Congress of American Industry to be held in New York, December 5 and 6, in conjunction with the annual convention of the National Association of Manufacturers. The communiqué declared: "This is the time for industry to formulate a program upon which it can stand unitedly. It must be drafted in a full spirit of helpfulness with the government in the mutual desire to eliminate unemployment by stimulating private enterprise." * * * W. I. Myers, governor of the Farm Credit Administration, reported that during the first nine months of this year the average of farm land prices, on the basis of actual sales, was 20 percent above the 1933 average. "Renewed interest in farm real estate reflects the general improvement in agricultural conditions and the diminishing pressure of farm indebtedness," Mr. Myers said. * * * Federal Reserve Banks announced an expansion of $1,136,000 in industrial loans in a week in the middle of this month, the largest advance since the Reserve Banks began making such loans last summer, lifting the total to $7,753,000. Commitments to make industrial advances rose to a total of $4,257,000. Reserves of member banks increased $75,000,000. * * * Loew's Incorporated, moving picture theatre operators, reported a net profit for the year ending August 31, last, of $7,479,897 on a gross income of $96,877,672. The net profit of a year ago was $4,034,290. * * * Francis Biddle of Philadelphia was appointed chairman of the National Labor Relations Board and his first action was to secure cooperation of the Department of Justice in assuring trial of the Houde case by which a legal definition of collective bargaining, as mentioned in Section 7a of the Recovery Act, is sought to sustain the board interpretation that collective bargaining means dealing with spokesmen selected by the majority of employees in any concern on questions of wages, hours and working conditions.

The Wide World.—The League of Nations formally urged Paraguay and Bolivia to cease firing. Both have, it was pointed out, violated the covenant, so that sanctions are in order against either in case of obstinate refusal to enter negotiations for peace. The Chaco conflict has aroused great international interest largely by reason of exposure concerning the activities of munitions merchants. American firms sold equipment to both sides, meanwhile professedly paying no heed to "the voice of conscience." * * * Hitler energetically disavowed all intention of staging a *putsch* in the Saar Basin, and declared that his chief interest in the matter was the pacific effect which a final disposition of the Saar problem would have on Franco-German relations. His interviews were seconded by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda, which banned the distribution of Saar literature containing material critical of France. These steps were interpreted in some places as a species of gambling on the possibility of a weaker French foreign policy, now that Barthou's place has been taken by M. Laval. * * * The French Chamber of Deputies listened to a lurid report on German preparations for war, as delivered by Léon Archimbaud, reporter-general of the military budget. M. Archimbaud declared that in

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1935 Germany will have a standing army of 600,000 men, that 5,000,000 reserves would be in readiness for action, that a complete military equipment was under construction, and that there were now some 3,500 trained Nazi air pilots. Marshal Franchet d'Esperey followed up the report with a plea for greater intensity of preparation by France, and the assertion that a stable and energetic government was absolutely indispensable. It should be noted that M. Archimbaud's report considers the entire S. A. *potentiel de guerre* and counts in the 1,400,000 middle-aged veterans of the World War. * * * It is reliably reported that Drs. Eschweiler and Barion, Catholic theology professors in the seminary at Braunsberg, East Prussia, have been suspended by the ordinary. Both were noted as champions of the Nazi cause, Dr. Eschweiler going so far as to proclaim Hitler a "signal instrument of Providence." * * * The banks of France, Switzerland and the Netherlands reported that gold stocks had increased during the month of October. It was estimated that the reserves at the Banque de France were nearly at the peak reached during December, 1932. Under the circumstances the argument for a par-value franc is a little stronger than previously. According to dispatches, Belgium is likewise in a position to protect the value of its currency. It would doubtless be given powerful assistance.

* * * *

Cardinal Gasparri.—Pietro Cardinal Gasparri (1852-1934) died in Rome on November 18, the vicitim of an attack of influenza which developed into pneumonia. As a young man he attracted attention as a professor of canon law, which subject he taught in Paris and Rome. Under Pope Leo XIII, he was created an archbishop and sent to Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador as apostolic delegate. When Benedict XV ascended the papal throne in the fall of 1914, Cardinal Gasparri (elevated to the cardinalate by Pius X) became Secretary of State. The times were exceedingly difficult, but seldom in all history has the Church made such progress. After warding off all attempts to enlist the sympathy of the Holy See in favor of one power or the other, the Holy Father laid before the nations (in 1917) a plea for peace. This had a good chance of acceptance, but in the final analysis neither France nor Germany proved willing to accept papal mediation. Nevertheless the result was an extraordinary increase in the prestige of the Papacy as the sole power standing above national boundaries and devoted to the cause of humanity as a whole. Cardinal Gasparri let it be known that the Holy See was open to invitations from the newly constituted League of Nations; but the Roman Question and other things conspired to prevent rapprochement. In 1929, the Lateran Treaties were signed as the result of Mussolini's desire to solve a problem which barred the way to complete national unity. A year later Cardinal Gasparri retired, but came to the fore again as a special negotiator when the Holy See virtually broke with Mussolini over the treatment accorded Catholic youth organizations. Meanwhile he had earned a great reputation as a canonical scholar. One of his special interests was the legislation governing matrimony.

Marine on a White Horse.—An army of 500,000 Fascist men assembled in Washington, an attempt to persuade President Roosevelt to "go along" with the Fascist movement, and, if that should fail, the forced appointment of a Leader as Secretary of State and the forced resignation of the President and the Vice-President, thus leaving the Leader in possession of the constitutional powers of President as well as in control of the Fascist army, is a plan General Smedley D. Butler claims Wall Street put up to him with no smile. The McCormack-Dickstein House Committee on Un-American Activities announced it would make exhaustive inquiry into these charges and into certain other information it has received concerning unconstitutional plottings. According to General Butler, a bond salesman of Murphy and Company, 52 Broadway, named Gerald P. MacGuire, was go-between for the plotters, backed by J. P. Morgan and Company and Murphy and Company. General Hugh S. Johnson was scheduled for the part of dictator. Mr. MacGuire was supposed to have a sum of $3,000,000 ready for proper disbursement. General Johnson said about the charges: "Nobody said a word to me about anything of this kind, and if they did I'd throw them out the window." Mr. Thomas W. Lamont of the Morgan firm said: "Perfect moonshine! Too unutterably ridiculous to comment upon!" Colonel Grayson Murphy: "A fantasy!" Mr. MacGuire: "It's a joke—a publicity stunt. I deny the story completely." General Butler continued to maintain, "They were using me."

Is Prosperity Returning?—A summary of estimates of leading trade analysts, made by the Associated Press, shows a sharp upward curve in the total income of the American people in 1934. This is a reversal of a trend from 1929 to the first quarter of 1933, during which the national income had year by year been decreasing. In 1929 the national income was $86,106,000,000. It dropped until in the year ending in the first part of 1933 it was $49,560,000,000. In the second quarter of 1933, statistics reveal that the decline was definitely checked. At first the increase from month to month was barely perceptible. "By the end of the year, however," the report continues, "the upturn had gained considerable momentum and unless something now unforeseen interferes, expectations are that it will be making major strides at the end of this year." Estimates are that the national income for this year will total about $58,500,000,000. This would be an increase in national purchasing power of approximately $9,000,000,000 over last year. Economists have pointed out, the report concludes, that the last two major depressions in the United States were overcome only when an upward trend in the national income, accompanied by an increase in general business activity, occurred and business entered upon an important cycle of expansion shortly thereafter. These economists believe that the depression, on the basis of a comparison with previous experiences, forms "the groundwork of a broad concave base which will sustain a relative degree of prosperity over a number of years." Various reports, meanwhile, indicate steady increases in general business.

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Cardinal Mundelein's Silver Jubilee.—In the presence of 2,500 clergy and laity the twenty-fifth anniversary of George Cardinal Mundelein's elevation to the episcopate was celebrated at the Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, November 20. Numbered among those in attendance at the ceremonies were seventeen archbishops, eighty-seven bishops and nine abbots. After a solemn pontifical Mass of thanksgiving Cardinal Mundelein imparted the apostolic blessing at the express command of the Holy Father, who sent a message of felicitation and benediction in honor of the occasion. Cardinal Hayes of New York spoke on their "friendship of more than fifty years," their school days together in the Christian Brothers School in New York and their participation in majestic ceremonials beneath the dome of St. Peter's in Rome. The colorful procession of the ecclesiastics from the rectory and the cathedral schools to the entrance to the Holy Name Cathedral was witnessed by 10,000 people. Following the ceremonies at the cathedral the visiting clergy repaired to a Chicago hotel where the Most Reverend Amleto Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, and several of the American hierarchy praised Cardinal Mundelein for his labors of twenty-five years. A memorial volume, "The First Cardinal of the West," by Paul R. Martin, has been published in honor of the occasion (Chicago: The New World Publishing Company. $3.00).

Senator Long (La.).—Senator Huey P. Long has recently spent several spectacular weeks attending football games and arranging for his state to forge ahead in spite of the crippling ties that bind it to the other forty-seven states of the Union. In the three days, November 14, 15 and 16, he had the Louisiana House and Senate consider and pass forty-four bills he personally wrote. Since then he has been assuring old-fashioned banks, businesses and the federal lending agencies that the powers given him will not be used in such a way that enterprise should feel obliged to retire to less colorful sections of the country. One group of laws centralizes control of local and state administration in the governor's and hence Long's hands. A "State Civil Service Commission," appointed by the governor, will select all local police chiefs and control the forces. An appointed Public Service Commission will govern utility rates throughout the state, especially in New Orleans. Another will oversee New Orleans sewer and water management and rates; one will run the New Orleans public buildings; one will control the registration of voters; one will rule the bar and process of lawyers' certifications; and one will fix all property taxes. There are a group of miscellaneous laws, doing such things as coordinating election days, abolishing the poll tax, and reducing automobile taxes. The law most worrisome to opponents is the one declaring a two-year moratorium on all but public debts to be granted when Long's State Bank Examiner thinks it wise.

Catholic Boys' Brigade.—Every year the directors of the Catholic Boys' Brigade of the United States confer a decoration, known as the "Star Pro Juventute," upon a number of persons who have rendered distinguished service to the cause of youth. Among previous recipients are President Roosevelt, His Eminence Cardinal Hayes, and ex-President Herbert Hoover. This year a dinner, to be given in New York on the night of December 4, will serve as the occasion on which those to be honored this year will receive the Star. Three heads of Catholic universities—the Most Reverend James H. Ryan, of the Catholic University, the Reverend John F. O'Hara, C. S. C., of Notre Dame, and the Reverend Aloysius J. Hogan, S. J., of Fordham University—the Honorable Alfred E. Smith, and Mrs. Ann E. F. Ryan, founder of the Association for Catholic Action among Boys, are the recipients. Appropriate toasts and addresses will make the occasion an outstanding event. Information concerning the dinner can be obtained by addressing the Reverend Kilian Hennrich, O. M. Cap., at Catholic Boys' Brigade Headquarters, 316 West 85th Street, New York. The Brigade, founded in 1916 to do effective social work among boys without regard to race or creed, now has a national membership of more than 55,000 in twenty-six states. Late advices state that Captain William Pedrick, of the Fifth Avenue Association, will serve as toastmaster at the banquet, which Bishop Ryan and Mr. Smith will address. Honorary "wreaths" will be conferred on the Reverend Edward Roberts Moore, Magistrate Sylvester Sabbatino, Mr. Paul T. Kammerer, jr., Mr. Joseph P. Grace and Mr. Edward P. Mulrooney.

The Case of John Smiukse.—On August 31, last, John Smiukse, a house painter by trade and a native of Latvia, paid his way into the exhibit of the Westchester Institute of Fine Arts at Tarrytown, New York, where a mural, "The Nightmare of 1934," by the unknown artist, "Jere Miah II," had for several days been creating a furore because of its bitter lampooning of the President and Mrs. Roosevelt and other leaders in the New Deal. After dashing paint remover on the offending canvas, Smiukse touched a match to it and "The Nightmare of 1934" was no more. For this rash deed Smiukse was sentenced to six months in the Eastview Penitentiary, but on an appeal during which Jonas Lie, president of the National Academy of Design, put up $500 bail, the sentence was commuted. Now it is reported that a member of the Westchester Institute of Fine Arts has brought pressure to bear on the Department of Labor to deport the hasty New Deal zealot, who was ordered to report at Ellis Island November 21, to face deportation as an undesirable alien. His attorney plans to appeal to the federal courts, but is hoping that the case will come before Secretary Frances Perkins and perhaps even the President himself. Smiukse seemed quite philosophical about his new plight. "What can I do?" he is reported to have said. "I jumped ship back in 1928 and I'm here illegally. It is a little tough, though, to be picked up because a fellow does the right thing."

Star Stuff.—A star which had its blanket of atmosphere pulled from it by another passing star and is now blue, with its atmosphere condensed into a nucleus forming a

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second, or twin, star that is red, was among the marvels of outer space recently discovered that were described by Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of the Harvard College Observatory, at the autumn meeting of the National Academy of Science. Once every 972.3 days the red star eclipses the blue for thirty days. "This star is at the present time the most talked-of star in the universe," Dr. Shapley said. He further reported the discovery of 1,700 new variable stars whose periodic fluctuations of light furnish the measuring rods of the depths of the universe and announced the bringing up to a total of 125,000 of the faint galaxies charted in the course of the systematic survey of the whole sky being made by Harvard. About a third of the sky has now been surveyed. Each of the faint galaxies contains billions of suns—some, such as the Milky Way galaxy in which we are, having as many as 100,000,000,000 suns. The distances from the earth to the newly discovered galaxies range from 50,000,000 to 150,000,000 light years (a light year is 6,000,000,000,000 miles). Peculiarities have been found in the distribution of the galaxies which indicate that the entire system of the physical universe, known as the metagalaxy, is expanding while some regions are contracting and other vast regions appear to be at a standstill. In the twin supergalaxies of Hercules, for instance, the density of matter is 10,000 times greater than the average in the totality of space, which is considered evidence that that corner of the universe is contracting. The luminosity of some of the variable stars have been found to be 1,500 times that of our sun.

America's Arms Control Plan.—As intimated in these pages last week, the United States has proposed to the steering committee of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva a treaty providing for a rigid system of licensing for munitions makers with full publicity for all manufactures of and transactions in arms. An international commission composed of one member from each nation that signs the proposed treaty would have automatic power to investigate all public and private arms manufacture and trade and would keep the world informed regularly of their findings. Each government would be required to take the same steps in regard to licensing and would be bound to transmit to Geneva all arms licenses, details on all war vessels under construction and all orders for import and export trade in munitions. In making this proposal Hugh R. Wilson, American Minister to Switzerland, said the proposed treaty "would tend to lessen between states that constantly increasing fear of the unknown—a fear which is one of the most profound causes of anxiety and distrust between nations." He declared that "the adoption of such a text would greatly facilitate the adoption of a general disarmament convention." The Disarmament Conference committee empowered Arthur Henderson to send the American draft treaty to the other governments for study. Italy, which had been heartily in favor of the Hoover disarmament plan, opposed the project on the grounds that it could do nothing in Germany's absence and that it was unwilling to take up armament control before a general convention on disarmament. Austria refused to sign any conventions until she had received "equality in defense" and urged that this question be undertaken first. While France and Great Britain were said to be "sympathetically noncommittal," Russia, Spain and Sweden favored the American proposal.

* * * *

The Sale of Service.—The Bureau of Census has released statistics on the service industries of New York, including amusements, which should delight people who like to believe or not. The census takers found that New York State in 1933 had 66,196 service establishments, places of amusement and hotels, with total receipts of $631,839,000. There were 820 motion picture theatres which collected $85,150,000. The legitimate stage and opera took in $3,907,000; combined movies and vaudevilles, $4,850,000; dance halls, $1,111,000; pool rooms and bowling alleys, $3,508,000; "other amusements," $10,622,000. The total number permanently employed in the amusement business was 14,209, and 1,631 were on part time. The wage bill was $25,188,000, about one-fourth of the gross. There were 2,373 hotels found in the state, with receipts of $91,074,000, of which $26,476,000 went as wages to the 32,412 full-time and 983 part-time employees. The advertising agencies collected more than the hotels, a total of $99,900,000 for the year. The census listed 13,899 barber shops with gross revenue of $32,552,000, and 4,716 beauty parlors with a gross of $27,690,000. In the state there were still 46 livery stables in 1933 with a business of $468,000, and 494 blacksmith shops which took in $794,000.

The National Grange.—The annual convention of the farmers' National Grange opened in Hartford, Connecticut, on November 14, and in the next ten days, 20,000 delegates were expected. Officers' reports indicated the semi-secret organization of farmers is having a third resurgence. In 1875 it had 1,500,000 members and fought famously the railroads and monopolies. It declined, but in the 'nineties rose again as an agrarian wing of the populist movement. Now again it appears to be losing the obscurity it sank into in the last decades. Louis J. Taber, Master of the National Grange, proposed as general principles to be worked for: the lifting of farm prices, the reduction of farmers' service costs, an honest measure of value (evidently referring to money), a sound land policy, and the organization of the farmer. Chester C. Davis, administrator of the A.A.A., and W. I. Myers, governor of the Farm Credit Administration, spoke before the convention on November 16 and pictured a reviving farm industry. Mr. Myers especially emphasized the possibilities of cooperative credit. Dr. George F. Warren of Cornell and Washington later spoke to them about prices: "Prosperity is not the result of having either high or low prices. It is the result of a balance in the price structure." He claimed that slow-moving prices must be further deflated, or else, "either prices in gold must rise throughout the world, or the American price of gold must be increased."

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The Play

By GRENVILLE VERNON

The Irish Players

THAT the players as well as the play may at times be the thing was made beautifully evident in the performance of Lennox Robinson's "Drama at Inish" by the Abbey Players. Given by the Irish actors, it proved a most delightful satirical comedy, slender in story if you will, but whimsical, slyly humorous, filled with amusing people and amusing situations. Yet this very play when produced last season in New York under the title, "Is Life Worth Living?", speedily gave up the ghost with the full consent both of public and critics, despite the fact that the cast was composed of competent actors and the production was under the direction of the author himself. Now the year that has intervened between the two performances has scarcely changed the critics or educated the public. Why then the extraordinary difference in its reception? The reason is self-evident: given by the Broadway actors, the play was a tenuous bore; given by the Abbey Players, it was vivacious and even meaty. But "Drama at Inish" is probably no exception, for the fate which it received last year would probably have been the fate of any play in the Irish Players' repertory, given by any other than a strictly Irish troupe. Imagine Synge's "The Shadow of the Glen," or "The Playboy of the Western World," or Shiel's "The New Gossoon," presented by English or American actors, or, for that matter, even by Irish-American ones—the flavor, the meaning, the subtlety of character drawing would be gone, and with them the drama. The reason isn't far to seek—it is summed up in the basic fact that the modern Irish drama is strictly a product of its native soil, a true folk-drama, in spite of the fact that most of its creators are still living and their names signed to their plays. It is drama written by Irishmen, for Irishmen, to be played by Irishmen, and though there is a public outside Ireland which enjoys it, it enjoys it only when it recognizes its complete verity of atmosphere and characterization. For the Irish drama, like all folk-drama, depends for its effect upon its humors and its odd characters, and not upon universality of story or character.

There are those who hold that the present company from the Abbey Theatre is not the equal of the one headed previously by Arthur Sinclair and Sarah Allgood, but with the exception of Miss Allgood, whose quality and power were unique, I for one feel that the present organigation is fully the equal of its predecessor. Mr. Sinclair had of course certain things in his acting which also were unique, and Barry Fitzgerald plays his parts differently, it is true, but equally effectively. His Fluther Good is particularly fine, though he emphasizes the man's better qualities rather than his worse. Sinclair's impersonations had more of the acid in them, while Fitzgerald's, none the less down at the heel in character and slipshod in moral attitude, radiate a certain human unction which makes them forgivable and at times even lovable. In Fitzgerald's acting there is nothing that is ever thrown away, and yet its variety is extraordinary. And the peculiar way he speaks his lines, a combination of a lilt and a squeak, must be heard to be enjoyed, but once heard, enjoyed forever! Of the other members of the company honors must go to Eileen Crowe, equally good in comedy and tragedy, whose voice is one of the most beautiful instruments possessed by any of the younger actresses of the stage. Unlike many other members of the company she is more than a folk-actress and would probably make good in plays either of Broadway or Shaftsbury Avenue. The range of her acting is unusual. Her Nora Clitheroe in "The Plough and the Stars" is an emotional performance of the highest rank, yet her Sally Hamil in "The New Gossoon" is a most delightful enactment of a hard-boiled country flapper, and the somber poetry of her Nora Burke in "The Shadow of the Glen" is something never to be forgotten. Admirable too are Maureen Delany, who plays Miss Allgood's parts, and plays them well; Arthur Shields, whose Playboy is superb; Denis O'Dea, F. J. McCormick, and Michael J. Dolan. In witnessing the performance of any of these artists, one is struck by the unusual rôle played by the voice, and yet one never has the impression that the player is listening to or even conscious of the quality of his or her tones. The truth is that the poetic imagery of all these Irish folk-plays demands instruments worthy of the poet. And in the artists of the Irish Theatre such instruments have been found. There are in some of the performers traces of the amateur, but even these performers could give lessons to most Broadway actors in the use of the voice. There are those who would say that the chief joy of attendance at the Abbey performances is the joy of the ear. (At the Golden Theatre.)

Brittle Heaven

THIS little play founded on the life of Emily Dickinson, and based on the theory that the New England poetess is in love with Captain Edward Bissell Hunt, is rather charmingly written, but is chiefly of interest because of the beautiful enactment of the chief protagonist by Miss Dorothy Gish, and the almost equally good performance of Captain Hunt by Albert Van Dekker. Miss Gish has made tremendous strides in her acting recently, and her Emily Dickinson is a truly beautiful achievement. I have seen few love scenes on the stage given with the dignity, reserve, and yet with the sincerity of feeling of Miss Gish and Mr. Van Dekker. It is a pity that the subject-matter of the play could not have been more vital. Fine acting and delicacy and even poetry of dialogue are not enough to carry a play into success amid the hurly-burly of New York life. But some day Miss Gish and Mr. Van Dekker will find vehicles strong enough to place their talents before the public in the way they should be placed. (At the Vanderbilt Theatre.)

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Communications

ARE WE ON THE RIGHT ROAD?

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Most people will agree with much that Monsignor John A. Ryan writes in his admirable article, "Are We on the Right Road?" in the October 12 issue of THE COMMONWEAL. To me it remains a marvel how he could have fallen into the serious error of denying to his fellow citizens the legal and moral right to assert that any part of the recovery legislation is in conflict with the Constitution. The paragraph in his article which takes to task the critics of such legislation, actual or proposed, runs as follows (the italics are mine):

"Whether the minimum wage and maximum hours provision or any other provision in the codes of fair practise deprives the citizen of liberty 'without due process of law' is a question of constitutional construction. *Until this question has been answered by the Supreme Court no person has either legal warrant or a moral right to assert that the 'due process' clauses or any other clause of the Constitution prohibit any part of the recovery legislation.* In the final stage of construction the Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is. Therefore when any man or any newspaper recklessly, or even solemnly, declares that the recovery legislation is violating the Constitution I have a right to reply: 'I deny your interpretation of the Constitution, for I do not recognize your competence as interpreter. I prefer to await the authoritative verdict of the Supreme Court.'"

If you and I and the rest of us have neither legal warrant nor moral right to assert that any part of the recovery legislation is in conflict with the Constitution, Monsignor Ryan will have to wait until doomsday for the authoritative verdict of the Supreme Court. While it is true that one of the things for which we established the Supreme Court was to protect our rights against usurpation by governments, that Court gives its verdict only when one of us exercises that moral and legal right, which Monsignor Ryan would deny us, by challenging some law under which we feel ourselves aggrieved, refusing to obey it, and the matter is carried in the form of a case before the Supreme Court. Hence, to the man who declares that some part of the recovery legislation violates the Constitution, Monsignor Ryan must find some reply other than that he must wait for the authoritative verdict of the Supreme Court.

But this is not all. The verdict of the Supreme Court in some particular case does not necessarily end the matter. If that verdict be against the particular person whose case was carried before the Court, the latter is, of course, out of luck. He is bound by it. But the decision does not bind you or me. On an identical state of facts, you or I may assert our moral and legal right to challenge the law before the Supreme Court and seek by other arguments to convince the Court that it decided wrongly in the first instance. The court would be the first to admit that we had the moral and legal right to do so.

Perhaps we should not be too rough on the critics of the New Deal in so far as they deny the right of Congress to enact legislation which they contend is in conflict with the Constitution. Every one of those critics might very well subscribe to the incontestable propositions laid down by Leo XIII and reaffirmed by Pius XI. These propositions, the critics may say, hold true for the forty-eight of the forty-nine governments in America. The forty-ninth government—the government of the United States of America—is something else again. It is a government set up by the whole American people for certain purposes only. The Congress cannot legislate for the promotion of the general welfare outside those purposes without a new grant of power from the people to do so. A State Constitution and the Constitution of the United States are two vastly different things—different in their form and different in their objectives. The Constitution of the United States may be considered, as Iredell expressed it in the North Carolina Convention, as "a great power of attorney under which no power can be exercised but what is expressly given by the people." And as Webster once said, we must either admit that proposition, or dispute their (the people's) authority.

Monsignor Ryan doubtless knows that it took quite some salesmanship to sell the Constitution to the American people. One of the great salesmen—the distinguished Iredell of North Carolina, himself subsequently an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court—when the people were being urged to adopt the Constitution to protect their rights against their governments, told them this:

"If this Constitution be adopted, it must be presumed the instrument will be in the hands of every man in America to see whether authority be usurped; and any person by inspecting it may see if the power claimed be enumerated. If it be not, he will know it to be a usurpation."

FERNANDO HENRIQUES.

A CHRISTIAN IN PALESTINE

Ottawa, Canada.

TO the Editor: Your contributor, Ian Ross MacFarlane, in his otherwise interesting article entitled "A Christian in Palestine" has this to say:

"With the growth in prestige and accomplishment came rumblings from world Zionists demanding complete independence for Palestine, such, for example, as was lately granted to her inferior neighbor, Iraq. Going further with the theory, Britain apparently did not care to lose this garden spot of the Mediterranean so close to the Suez and boasting the ideally constructed harbor of Haifa, with its valuable terminus of the practically completed 1,100 kilometer pipe line to the oil fields of Mesopotamia. The fact that the Arab was disgruntled offered a solution; in fact, a double one. So long as the Palestinian Jewry was harassed by Arab threats, independence would remain secondary. Then if the word were gently passed to the Mohammedan Arab executive that atrocities, riots and others forms of guerrilla warfare as practised by them on the unfortunate unarmed Jews, would be winked at by Britain, these Arab Mohammedans would pass the word across those many miles of hot stifling desert and across the mountains to Beluchistan

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and Afghanistan to the millions of their fellow Indian Mohammedans that the British Lion was friendly to the sons of Allah in Palestine; whereupon these trouble-making Indian followers of the Great Prophet would behave. Yes, it's a theory, but in line with Britain's well-known international political policy of playing the weak ones against any momentarily strong rival."

Mr. MacFarlane's suggestion that Britain has deliberately promoted strife in Palestine is puerile and beneath contempt. His further suggestion that she has, for unworthy motives, arbitrarily withheld the grant of independence is almost equally foolish. For, what is the situtation? According to the census of 1922, the population numbered 757,182 of whom 590,890 were Moslems and only 88,794 were Jews. At the next census, in 1931, out of a total population of 1,035,154 the Jews had increased to 175,006 or 17 percent, but the Moslems still numbered 759,952 or 73 percent. What, then, would Mr. MacFarlane have Britain do? Grant independence and leave the Jews to the tender mercies of the Arab majority? Would his Jewish friends be satisfied with such a solution? Or, contrary to the most elementary principles of democracy, disfranchise the Arabs and place the small Jewish minority in supreme command? The impracticability of either course must be evident.

In concluding his article, Mr. MacFarlane remarks:

"It appears to me, as a Gentile who looked at Palestine thoroughly, that the future of this little country depends solely on the continued constructive work of local Jewry, the continued support of world Jewry and the sympathetic non-partizan understanding of all Christians who believe in justice and true liberty."

But how about "justice and true liberty" for the Palestinian Arabs? It must not be forgotten that Palestine is their country and has been so for more than a thousand years. Ever since the dispersion, some eighteen hundred years ago, the Jews have formed but a small minority of the population. The recent influx of Jews should mean much for the prosperity of Palestine, if the two races can work harmoniously together, but the native population is surely entitled to first consideration.

Incidentally, Mr. MacFarlane's evident enthusiasm for the Communist colonies that he describes is not likely to be shared by many of his fellow Christians.

W. L. Scott.

THE ALTAR AND OURSELVES

New York, N. Y.

To the Editor: In your issue of October 5 there appeared a short editorial entitled, "The Altar and Ourselves," which dealt with an article, "An Altar Society of Wider Scope," by Wellington J. A. Schaefer, published in the most recent issue of *Liturgical Arts*.

I wonder whether the author of this editorial paragraph would be willing to expand his matter and make somewhat clearer the meaning which he has in mind? It would seem to me that so important a subject as the liturgical movement always deserves extended consideration, as it has so often received such consideration, in your columns. The author of this paragraph has apparently a new and interesting point of view, although I confess that I am puzzled at its nature.

Your paragraph begins by commenting favorably upon a part of the article in question. Then it goes on to protest against a single statement made in the article—namely, that the care of the sanctuary is "surely more appropriate in the hands of men than of women." It seems to be the general opinion among liturgists and students of Canon Law that this view represents the Mind of the Church. In some dioceses it is even specifically forbidden that nuns work in the sanctuary or take care of the altar, outside of convent chapels. The author of your paragraph goes on to associate this idea, that the sanctuary should, wherever possible, be exclusively masculine, with the "days of Morris and Rossetti." In fact he suggests that such opinions represent merely "a pale Catholic afterglow" of those days. I am again puzzled at his meaning. As I recall, the Blessed Damozel sung in a choir, and in general I should assume that Rossetti had the type of mind which would have disapproved of the Church's insistence on masculine vested choirs and, by inference, would surely have agreed with your editorial's objection to any preference for an exclusively masculine sanctuary.

It is also rather difficult to understand the association in your editorial of the care of the sanctuary with the arts of the Church. Some connection could undoubtedly be established, but surely the subject deserves longer treatment.

May I express the hope that an expansion of this point of view on liturgical matters may be forthcoming in your admirable columns?

Harry Lorin Binsse.

Oakland, Calif.

To the Editor: Your editorial in the issue of October 5 on the suggestion in *Liturgical Arts* which recommended the formation of groups of men for the care of the sanctuary asks some questions which are supposed to be rhetorical, no doubt, but answers to them are needed. It is true that women, religious and lay, have had the care of sanctuaries in their hands for a long time and in many places: and look at the results!

Our altars are bedecked with excessively numerous bouquets of flowers which almost encroach upon the corporal and do deposit their refuse and insects upon it. The front of our altars are hung with a most inappropriate flounce of lace, and the sacred linens are edged with tatting, lace and various kinds of fancy work. Palls are decorated with ghastly and inappropriate decorations, often painted in garish colors. Priests, who are men, are fussed out in lace, which is essentially a feminine and frivolous decoration which the good religious women would not even tolerate on their own habits, and rightly so.

Could you give us an article showing just how "the past record of liturgical art would be vastly less significant and rich than it is" if it had not been for the feminine contribution? Do you think that the present state of liturgical art is "significant and rich"? Your last sentence concerning "a damsel" drying Our Saviour's feet with her hair is entirely irrelevant and out of place.

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May I suggest that such an estimable publication as THE COMMONWEAL should see that the liturgical movement stands for dignity and beauty in worship and the placing of the focus of decoration and action where it belongs. It is no "pale afterglow" of anything but quite sound and timely. Intelligent pagans are repulsed by the tinsel and lace and plaster shams of our churches—also by bad music—and are impressed and drawn to the Church when the externals are employed as they were meant to be. Men are already active in leading the way back to the honest and sound in liturgical art. Read "The Liturgical Altar," by Geoffrey Webb; "Beauty Looks after Herself," by Eric Gill; "Vestments and Vesture" by Roulin; also the *Liturgical Arts Quarterly*. It is also worthy of note that the best makers of vestments in Europe employ men as designers and craftsmen in their establishments. If men can lead us out of our era of bad taste in liturgical art, they should be encouraged by all means. Commercialized "art" and the feminine touch have certainly made a botch of things.

E. C. D.

Editor's Note.—By way of comment it may be permissible to remark that the attack in re feminine care of the sanctuary was based on two considerations: first, that such opinions reflect insufficient acquaintance with art history and particularly with the history of ecclesiastical art; second, that they provide fodder for those who resist sound liturgical progress because they are repelled by a certain esthetic temperamentalness (it's a gross word, but let it go) assumed to characterize a number of authorities on candlesticks, vestments, et cetera, who bedeck the fringe of the liturgical movement. How widespread this repulsion is, nobody knows better than Mr. Binsse, who is simply sparring amiably and none too gracefully when he assumes that Rossetti is identifiable with the musical functions of the Blessed Damozel. The Pre-Raphaelite attitude is for us that which prevents devotion when a rosebud sags in a vase, or when the folds of a chasuble do not hang at the prescribed number of degrees.

We like E. C. D.'s letter very much. If it will comfort him any, we shall cheerfully admit to having read a few books on the subject. But why can't he see that the difference between good and bad liturgical art is not at all a matter of sex? This art developed to a considerable extent out of the direct care of the sanctuary, as witness Ravenna in the days of Galla Placidia or Rome in the days of Saint Helena. Today men are employed as craftsmen, but so are women—with what success is evident from the work of Pauline Peugniez, Ruth Schaumann, Gabrielle Faure, Sabine Desvallières and others too numerous to mention. After all there is somebody else in the world besides Eric Gill. The point is simply one of good taste and sound religious instinct. We have been looking about us now for some years, and we shall confess (despite a very natural prejudice) that women seem at least as well supplied with the above desirable commodities as men. Nor are the past awful hundred years a time during which the "he" of the species was dumb and in chains.

Books

An Altered Liberal

Beyond the New Deal, by David Lawrence. New York: Whittlesey House. McGraw-Hill Book Company. $2.50.

TIME was when David Lawrence passed for a liberal, or at least a progressive. That was during the administration of President Wilson when his interpretations of the Wilsonian policies and intentions were regarded by many as authentic if not inspired. Nor are indications entirely wanting today that he still looks upon himself as some sort of liberal, or at least as not belonging in the class of reactionaries. Nevertheless, he may fairly be set down as a consistent apologist for capitalism unmitigated.

This attitude is clearly shown in his recent book. While he joins in the chorus of those who assert that the country must not go back to those bad old days of the 1920's, the only capitalistic offenses of that decade which he clearly denounces are such enormities as the dishonest flotation of securities, crooked and reckless banking and the orgy of speculation which culminated in the crash on the Stock Exchange in October, 1929. Apparently he desires to retain all the essentials of the business practises which prevailed before that date, namely, a minimum of government regulation, a denial of the right of effective labor organization, unlimited profit, no considerable diversion of national income from capital to labor, and the gold standard.

The volume is not effectively written nor are the arguments effectively presented. The discourse is too diffuse; there is too much repetition; there is a lack of precision and definiteness, both in the critical and in the constructive paragraphs. Some of the proposals are based upon an inadequate grasp of facts as well as a lack of acquaintance with the best economic opinion. The author refers to depressions as "infrequent." The facts are that there have been twenty-nine major depressions in the United States since the year 1790 and that the years of depression up to 1925 were to the years of prosperity as one to one and a half. The word "infrequent" is scarcely accurate. He thinks that the severity of the Regulation of Securities Act is responsible for the lack of new flotations in the capital goods industries, but he gives no proof whatever for this assertion. He tells us that $6,000,000,000 are needed immediately for the replacement of obsolete machinery and the erection of buildings. This assertion is equally unsupported by evidence. Not the Securities Act nor lack of confidence is responsible for the failure of revival of the capital goods industries. The real explanation is that these industries have been overdeveloped for a long time, and what replacements are necessary to supply current demand or even a considerably increased demand, can be provided largely out of existing surpluses in the large corporations. The smaller concerns are unable or unwilling to borrow money for replacements because this would involve incurring debts which would in most cases be intolerable. To replace

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so-called obsolete machinery with new types is not a profitable proceeding unless there is some assurance that the demand for the products will be sufficient to carry the still unpaid debts on account of the "obsolete" instruments as well as the charges on the new debts to be contracted in buying the new instruments. This debt phenomenon—it is not the least baffling of our current economic problems—seems to have entirely escaped the attention of Mr. Lawrence. As a matter of fact, indications are accumulating that whatever may be the way out of the depression, it will not be through a revival of the capital goods industries. Those who, like Mr. Lawrence, measure the need of new or replacement of old capital goods by the amounts invested for these purposes in the 1920's have before them a sad disillusionment. If this thing were done, it would be a purely speculative performance entailing a worse economic collapse than the one from which we have not yet extricated ourselves.

The author gives no indication that he has yet grasped the fundamental fact that we can neither get out of this depression nor avoid another depression without a large diversion of the national income from the richer classes to the masses who would spend the money for the products of industry and thus keep industry going. Another palmary fact that he overlooks is the greatly reduced rate of population increase. In the Epilogue to the volume we are informed: "America's productivity will be strained some day to the utmost, to feed the increasing population of our own land." This is a very, very bad joke, and it is on Mr. Lawrence and all the other persons who have not taken adequate account of our decreasing birth rate and of the arrival of stationary population within the next ten or fifteen years.

"Beyond the New Deal" perhaps suggests to many of its readers the expectation of finding a systematic program of economic organization or reorganization. Such readers will be badly disappointed.

JOHN A. RYAN.

Money

The Breakdown of Money, by Christopher Hollis. New York: Sheed and Ward. $1.50.

MAJOR DOUGLAS'S English school of social credit disciples are rendering a real service in undermining orthodox ideas about our money and credit system. I am far from convinced as to the workability of their proposed solutions. Mr. Hollis's book does not purport to offer a complete solution but to give a historical outline of money. As a pamphlet against the monetary tabus which are current among the most intelligent people, Mr. Hollis' book should prove effective. There is a real danger in a persistent observance of the tabu of sound money. For example, it was sound money when certain banks created $25,000,000 of credit to assist promoters to market stocks and mortgage bonds of a $57,000,000 office building which has never since its construction earned its operating costs, depreciation charges and taxes. But, when it is proposed today that the State create purchasing power through the issuance of bank deposit credit

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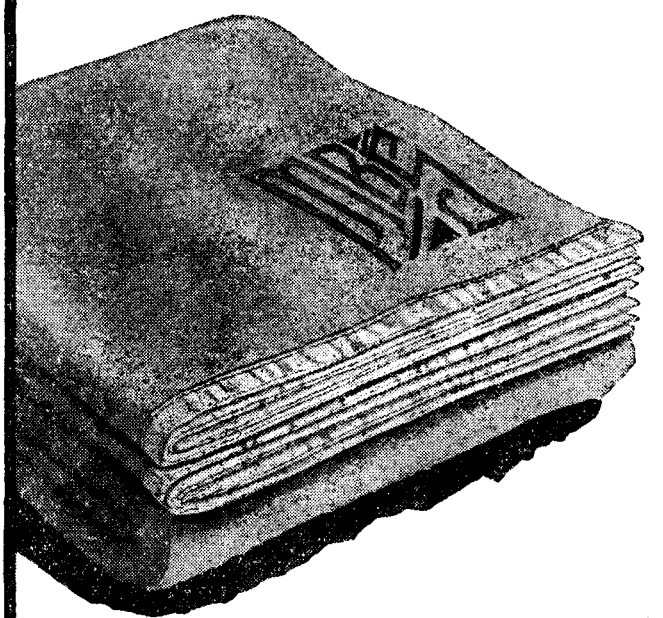

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NEXT WEEK

CATHOLICS IN GERMANY, is by a distinguished German Catholic publicist, author and leader whose name, for certain well-known reasons, is withheld. It divulges that "the Church confronts in Hitlerism a hostile force which is adroitly camouflaged. Whereas Marxist 'godless societies' openly reveal what they are and mean to do, National-Socialism is attired in the veil of 'positive Christianity,' behind which the inwardly ravenous wolf often remains unseen." The steps taken to destroy the religions men hold in Germany today and the nature of the heresy of "Positive Christianity," which affirms that Christ belonged to the Nordic-German race, are simply and unemotionally exposed. . . . CONCERNING HALOS, by Grace P. Cummings, takes up the defense of the girls and women who work because they have to and asserts that any attempt to deprive women wholesale of the opportunity of holding jobs will be strenuously resisted by those women who have been fortunate enough to achieve homes of their own where they are under no necessity of earning a money wage. . . . YOUTH IN RETROSPECT, by Alfred J. Barrett, tells of the thriving American youth movement of the Sodality of Our Lady, which is on December 5 celebrating the 350th anniversary of its canonical founding and confirmation by Pope Gregory XIII. How it has been energized and built up in recent years, and how it is conducted and some of the things it does, are vividly described. . . . DEPOSIT INSURANCE 100 PERCENT, by J. Elliot Ross, proposes to take away from banks the power of pyramiding money and contracting it, and to make all exchange tokens government money and make banks keep a 100-percent coverage of deposits. This would involve the issue of $40,000,000,000 and one of the first uses in the issuance of this money, the writer proposes, is retirement of the government debt. "I am inclined to think that the capacity of the government offers greater security than the judgment of bankers," he says.

or paper currency, without interest, to finance slum clearance and the building of socially useful public works, we are told that money so created is unsound money.

The creation of bankers of money to finance a venture expected to yield a profitable return is sound. The creation of money by the State is unsound, except in connection with the financing of wars. War financing by loans, facilitated by vast issues of paper money or deposit credit, is sound for the simple reason that if wars are not thus financed, they would have to be paid for outright in taxes by the wealthy who buy war loan issues. Mr. Hollis makes a good point when he shows that the Great English Revolution which won the right of Parliament to vote all money spent by the State, merely conferred on Parliament the right to prevent the king's wars from being financed by capital levies and thus to force the king to finance his wars by borrowing from those who would otherwise be levied on.

The really outstanding contribution of this book, as of most of the writings of the social credit school, is that of stating and illuminating with examples and logical analysis the absurdity of a financial system which makes it necessary to suffer want in the midst of plenty and a potential capacity of producing several times what we now produce. Social credit is never on better ground than when it limits itself to a statement of the fact of want in the midst of potential abundance and then puts it up to the bankers, to the business men and to all good citizens who wish to uphold the existing financial system.

If one wants to be critical of Mr. Hollis's book, or of the numerous social credit thinkers who think mainly in terms of money and its flow, one need only observe that the difficulties of our economic situation are bigger than money. Money and its behavior furnish only one method of measuring the aggravation of our social maladies, just as heat and a thermometer afford only one type of indications of what is wrong with a sufferer from a fever disease. Obviously, there is more to a fever disease than a high temperature. There are germs to destroy, tissues and vital forces to build up and so on.

People like Mr. James Warburg, who represent the international banking viewpoint, plead for sound money, and what others call deflation, because they want a system under which it will be possible for them to make a maximum of money and enjoy a maximum of power. The attack on sound money is an attack on the profits system, though many inflationists and members of the social credit school are not intellectually honest or penetrating enough to see it. The attack on any use of money or credit to finance social expenditures is an attack on Socialism or collectivism.

The mistake Mr. Hollis and many social credit believers seem to make is that of supposing there is a way to manage money so that society will be well served and freedom of private capital maintained. Productive capital can either be state owned and thus state managed or it can be left in private hands subject to unlimited public direction with a view to achieving a tolerable social order. But productive capital left to the direction of

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competitive private management seems capable of giving us only what we have. Managing money, to mean anything, must mean managing productive capital. The history of money is the history of predatory capitalism and individualism.

LAWRENCE DENNIS.

Myself a Censor

I Consign to the Flames, by Ivor Brown. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.00.

THIS is a book which many have been waiting for—a savage, bitter and yet witty attack on the gods of the self-appointed intelligentsia. Not since the late Harvey Wickham's "The Impuritans" have these gods of tin and clay and mud had such a joyous lambasting. Mr. Brown's dislikes are the dislikes of the normal educated man and woman, and hence his book will be pilloried in the liberal-radical-communistic book sections of the daily and weekly press. Not to bow down at the shrines of Freud and D. H. Lawrence, and Negro dances, to insist that Mr. Cummings and Miss Marianne Moore are the negation of poetry, and to pillory the methods of the "progressive schools," is anathema to a large section of our literary gentry, and the fact that Mr. Brown likes little better the older type of English school with its character worship, and its mistrust of knowledge, won't save him from these gentry's flames. However, as these flames are of colored paper rather than of heat, he will escape unscathed. But the flames to which Mr. Brown commits his hates are real enough and the roaring which ensues as one by one he throws his victims to their well-deserved fate is truly heartening.

The spirit informing Mr. Brown's book is admirably expressed in one paragraph of his opening chapter, "The Feast of Unreason": "My object is to relate all the follies of the day to their common origin. The committers of folly, the authors of the rubbish which I commit to my symbolical flames, have not, in all probability, the wit to understand any general principles of puerility. It needs reason to understand that the source of the trouble is a general flight from reason and from the legacy of civilized opinion in which past reason has been embodied. The world increasingly substitutes fisticuffs for argument, flags and symbols for facts and realities, belief in the omnipotence of the subconscious for faith in self-determination of the will by reason guided. It grovels before Negro art; it teaches its children that impulse is divine. Consequently it has no standards, as it certainly has no security." Mr. Brown is no reactionary, though he will undoubtedly be damned by that all-inclusive epithet. He is a very wise, very witty, very courageous man, who knows how to write pungently. And he isn't afraid to label many of the "classics" of the day "rubbish"—which is quite the word for them. He believes in form, in good taste, in balance, and what is not so heretical as it was before the Hitler purge, in democracy. "I Consign to the Flames" is a book to be bought and owned—and quoted.

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Oil

The Secret War, by F. C. Hanighen. New York: John Day. $2.75.

ALL THE oil resources of Persia for sixty years might have belonged to the Church, and the people of that land made accessible to missionary effort, had it not been for the quarrels of the oil barons at the turn of the century. This startling fact is brought out as a sidelight, incidental to the main story of the secret war.

It happened this way. An Australian named D'Arcy for years explored Persia, seeking oil. He was an engineer and, finding no oil, he accepted the shah's offer to modernize the country. His reward was a fair-sized fortune and a grant for sixty years of the right to all sub-soil resources in the nation. Knowledge of this right got abroad and he was offered as high as $600,000 for it, but he turned down all offers. On his voyage home D'Arcy met a priest in whom he confided and to whom he gave the grant with the understanding that it was to go to the Church. Simple D'Arcy; the "priest" was a British Intelligence officer, a Jew with the name "Reilly."

This is one of the least of the exposés by Mr. Hanighen in a book filled with little else. Oil, through the instrument of competing English and American companies, has put in office every Mexican president since Diaz, says Hanighen. The dynastic wars of Arabia, the revolution of Sandino, the Greek-Turkish war, the bombardment of the Dardenelles, the Chaco war, the Russo-Jap factions, the Russo-Persian troubles, the Rumanian conquest, these and many other wars have been financed with oil money. Were it not that he supplies a lengthy bibliography from which the reader may delve into sources for himself the author's word in these matters might be doubted, so fantastic are his accusations. But Mr. Hanighen previously wrote an exposé of the arms industry which to the present has developed no libel suits. And it is safe to assume that his statement in regard to the Rockefellers, the Detardings, the Sinclairs and the rest of that small circle of competing oil magnates, will develop no greater stir of resentment.

Just how much good such exposés do the public is open to question, so little can be done about them in the face of the great financial power arrayed to uphold injustices. At least for Catholics the discussion about Mexico, of which they are so complacent, should stir to more than resentment.

STUART D. GOULDING.

Psychology and Youth

Training the Adolescent, by Raphael C. McCarthy, S.J. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company. $2.00.

ADOLESCENCE, the period of storm and stress, was always a subject of more than ordinary importance to parents and educators. From the beginning of Christianity until modern times, the Church produced men who in word and action labored for the proper training of youth. More recently, a deeper and more systematic interest in psychology has brought to light

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many facts that corroborate and illustrate the age-old wisdom of the Church as applied in her educational institutions and her families.

Father McCarthy combines the old and new and presents a college text in psychology of adolescents from a Catholic viewpoint. This being the first work of its type in the English viewpoint, naturally arouses curiosity. The author has done his work well. The matter is well arranged and seemingly nothing of importance has been omitted. Controversial matters of interest to experts only have no place in a textbook.

As starting points, the author demands that every youth should persistently endeavor to save his soul; to make life a success; to be loyal to correct principles; and to be just and pure. To realize this, young men and young women need guidance, assistance and correction. To benefit youth along these lines, some knowledge of the underlying and contributing causes of misconduct and of practical ways to remedy or forestall them is absolutely necessary. This knowledge the author supplies in a language that is readily understood by teachers and parents alike. A bibliography and topics for discussion are valuable additions to each chapter. The book deserves a large circulation.

KILIAN J. HENNRICH.

The Spirit Hearkens

Corporal Tune, by L. A. G. Strong. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

IN POETIC prose Mr. Strong has created Ignatius Farrelly who, in a moment of pure exaltation, realizes that life is "but a corporal tune, which the spirit heard and interpreted as best it might." He is a brilliant writer suffering from an organic disease. As the wall between life and eternity becomes thinner and thinner, he grows not only more introspective but also startlingly aware of the thoughts and intentions of others. The professionalism of the nursing home is preferable to the anxious solicitude of his sisters, but he humbly recognizes in himself the fault that has made mutual understanding impossible. He suddenly realizes that his adored wife, Stella, who had died in childbirth, had left him another man's son. Yet for her he feels only pity because "love understands all things." That she loved him to all eternity as he loves her, he does not question but he well understands how the body can hamper the spirit.

The description of the sick room is vivid and the thoughts and emotions of a sick man preparing for an operation are sensitively recorded. Mr. Strong's remarkable pictorial ability was never more in evidence than when he is describing the Scotch countryside that Ignatius so dearly loves. One feels that Stella awaits him and that when Ignatius dies, with her name on his lips, he stumbles toward her in the sure knowledge that "his spirit was about to hear another tune." The final chapter of "Corporal Tune" is magnificent and adds greatly to Mr. Strong's prestige as a novelist.

DORIS CUNNINGHAM.

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Briefer Mention

Prelude to Winter, by Helen Frith Stickney. Atlanta: Banner Press. $1.50.

DELICATELY intellectual and pleasantly proficient, these poems represent the prize-winning output of a Catholic poet in a national contest sponsored by the magazine, *Verse Craft*. Simple themes—nature, the city's encroachments on the country, metropolitan noise, spiritual and physical silence, spring, autumn—most of them, the more successful, have. Where the theme turns more ambitious and lengthy, the thought seems less exact and distinguished than the shorter poems would lead one to expect. The meter, though still apt, loses some of its virtue. For that reason the poems, where longer, lose slightly in lilt and passion. But, where brief and simple, as in "Summer Interlude," "Sea Foam," the four poems in "Nameless Footsteps," "Egotist," "Aged Woman," "Vermont" and "Mist"—especially "Mist" (the finest in the volume)—they have a subtle, reticent charm. What the poet sees and feels standing directly before nature is, given her perceptive range, of surest moment.

The King of the Archers, by René Bazin; translated by Mary Russell. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

THIS tale of the strength of French family ties, simply and objectively told, has for its background the weaving industry in Roubaix, Flanders, just a step from the Belgian frontier. The action takes place in our own day, although there are also roots in the past such as the annual archery contest at Roubaix for the titles of king and emperor and the century-old Procession of the Most Precious Blood at Bruges, Belgium. There is a hint of the future in the Lepers-Hooghe experiment of establishing workers in their own new cottages with small, electrically driven looms installed and a decent-sized plot to till. The main thread of the story is the estrangement and reconciliation of the "King of the Archers," the weaver Alfred Demeester, and his daughter, Adéline. The picture of his fifteen-year-old granddaughter, Claire, and his neighbors, Marthe, the laundress, and her sister, Marie, is particularly attractive.

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